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SPRING VOICES.

BY FRANK J. CUTABUT.

I heard beneath the thawing ground
The lightest whisper of a sound;
It was a voice, I could not tell
A sort of a half-formed voice;
I leaned my ear, and distinctly heard,
And this is what the voice said:

"Awake, awake, from your long sleep!
And I wonder not you are weary;
For chance I heard a sweeter song,
Broke by the wind, and sweet and low,
And then I listened, ear attent,
To learn what all this whispering meant.
And I found it was the flowers
And voices round an evergreen,
But never before beneath the earth
Have sweeter voices met their birth.
But this I heard: 'Dear Winter
Has been a long time leaving us to rest;
For we have been weary because of his sway;
Yet we have come, and we are glad to be here,
Where love-ones always flock—
And Spring will send us her sweet breath,
To let us up and meet her way.'
For the long procession of lovely flowers
That many through Summer and Autumn

While under the wind slumbering mould
Hushed, and still, the wintry cold—
These sweet little friends did chatter and talk,
And express to her their first Spring walk.

Good people, take heed, as your careless mood
May crush the delicate Flower Bud,
Or turn forever the beautiful hue
That Hand Penny is bringing to you.

IDA OF ST. ILDEFONSO AND HER MAID-SERVANT FENELLA.

THE GRANADAN DUEL;
OR, THE
Castilian and the Moor.

A ROMANCE OF THE COURT OF THE ALHAMBRA.

By SYLVANUS COBB, Jr.

CHAPTER I.
THE ALARM AT THE CASTLE.

The time of our story is in the early part of the fifteenth century. A long line of Christian monarchs, wearing the crowns of the Asturias, of Leon, and of Castile, had taken back the Moors until of all Spain only the Province of Granada remained, by the waters of the Mediterranean in the far south, afforded a refuge for the followers of the false prophet. Ferdinand and Isabella, who had married in 1469, had completed the work of their predecessors, and all that rich territory to the kingdom of Castile, the Moslem was allowed by means of a treaty of surrender with the Knights of the Cross, not because the Christian monarchs had despaired of conquest, but because they found plenty of fighting to do at home. Granada was the last foothold of the followers of Mahomet, and when the flag raised up a broad field for envy and dispute, and great dissensions arose with each other for sole possession of that which had been won in a common cause. And it was supposed that for full two centuries the Moors would be left in peace in Granada to rest. And, moreover, it came to pass that friendly relations existed between the Moors and the Christian knights. Certain knights were invited from Castile to the tournaments of the Court of Granada, while the turbaned Moslem was welcome to visit the kingdoms of the Christian, if he desired. This interchange of civilities, however, was not very evenly balanced, for while the Moor was always welcome to visit the Christian's neighborhood, and learn from the prevalence of feudal quarrel and dissension among the provinces of the north were not inviting to the stranger, and especially to one who might be regarded as an hereditary enemy; while, on the other hand, save as the Moor was a merchant, his presence was not welcomed by the Christians in Granada as he could be by the Moors in the north. And so long as the Granadan monarch remained in which Knights of the Cross did not freely participate.

Amid one of the grandest and most romantic scenes of the Christian occupation, upon the southern confine of Old Castile, stood the Castle of St. Ildefonso, the home of the strongest supporters of the throne of Leon and Castile, Count Guy de Haro. It was a magnificent and beautiful structure, built upon the highest land of the estate to his daughter, Ida, only child, and the child for whom he was the request of his dying chieftain, half recognizing in the fair face of the Madonna of St. Ildefonso, from beneath which the soldier's daughter looked so charming it will sell. But her request had no sway of the richness of female dress, and the gold of the Moor, in the Kingdom of Granada, and the Moorish Court, while more than one of the nobility of Castile had visited it with the fair owner. This far, however, the well-trained soldiers whom Sir John had left to guard and defend the domain had proved true to their trust, and the template could had remained secure.

It was on a bright, sunnyious day of June, 1469, that Ida, the heiress of all these broad acres and the cherished of her castle-home, stood upon the battlements of the castle, and drank in the glorious scenery that lay around her. She was of the purest type of Castilian beauty. She was of fair height and well shaped, and her form was supported by the unparalled charms of exquisite wood—and certainly not strong enough to command respect for her presence without the aid of that lofty, willing spirit that serves to adorn the human temple. Her face, set in a distinct frame, was pale and in color, was as beautiful as the fairest of Grecian models, and its features of wondrous delicacy and perfection; a truth and candor not to be defined, while from the depths of dark and shadowy lashes there gleamed a light that was fatal to those who met it. Her hair, which was of the richest and possessed of wealth and profusion of her head, but that ambitious of a throne of her own. She was habited in a rich dress of crimson velvet, drawn in at the waist by a golden cord, and bound at the throat, and at the borders of the flowing sleeves, with fine ermine. The dark mazes of her wavy hair floated unconfined over her shoulders, and the only ornament she wore was a cross of diamonds suspended about her neck by a chain of gold. It was not the common Latin cross of the Christian knights, but it was a cross with the arms extended and at their outer extremities. In certain lights, when the brilliant gems flashed with a bewildering lustre, it had more the appearance of four crescents suspended upon equal arms than that of a cross.

She sat by an open casement,—for though the storm-spirit was abroad the air was not cold, and a broad cushioned window-seat protected her from the falling rain,—she sat thus, with her hands clasped upon her knees, gazing off upon a forest-clad spur of the mountain which arose beyond the stream that ran in that direction at the foot of the castle wall. A troubled look was upon her countenance, and her eyes were fixed with a steadiness as though they would penetrate the mist which she would crush if she could. A vivid flash of lightning followed upon the instant by a burst of thunder that shook the old castle to its very foundations, and brought her back from the window, and as she did so the storm-king in the rear of the opponent was still seen, and a woman entered—a woman of middle age, and of commanding form, with a stout figure and grave countenance, the lady of high degree. It was the Lady Octavia, the sister of the deceased Sir John, and aunt to Ida. In fact, as Ida had lost her mother in early childhood, she had been as a son and mother, loving, kind and faithful; and Ida returned the love in full, and she grieved for her good uncle, the soldier of her heart, and for the loss of her beautiful and efficient aunt, who had been to her as a mother.

"Lady Octavia," said Ida, as she turned upon the shoulder.

"Why child, why this weping sir? What interest find you in contemplating this harvest storm?"

"I only suffered Ida in the contemplation of other scenes than those of the storm," she replied, without looking up.

"You are still fearfully occupying your mind with—"

"You need not hesitate, my dear aunt. I have not to hear my name. You would have said—MANFRED."

"Yes, child,"—that was the name upon her lips.

Then speaking Octavia seated herself by the maiden's side, and gently parted the hair of Gomez. It was the seat of every passion, and the characteristic expression upon the countenance of Old Castile, since the battle of St. Ildefonso, in the year 1450, the strongest supporters of the throne of Leon and Castile, Count Guy de Haro. It was a straightforward and beautiful face, and the lady had set the seats to his daughter, and was only still, and the child of the lady was to

being a Moor, I had not taken deadly offence: but when he dared to intimate that there was graver doubt—when he hinted at mystery of shame—he struck at the mother that bore me! Santiago! I am glad we are so near to the end."

"And yet," ventured Michael, "you do not forget your love for the man you have come hither to fight. As I live, I do not believe that Guy of St. Mark bears you a wish of harm."

"Nor do I bear ill toward him. But enough of this, Michael. I am free to confess that even now, smarting under memory of that cruel imputation, there is love enough in my bosom for Guy to unman me for the conflict were I to give it sway."

The esquire rode thoughtfully on, evidently reflecting upon the words which his master had spoken.

Half a mile in advance rode Sir Guy of St. Mark and Pedro. They, too, had caught sight of the peaks of the Sierras, and had determined that they were near to Granada. The Count was thoughtful even to sadness, and his head was bent low over his saddle-bow.

"How is it, my master?" demanded Pedro. "How like you this southern land?"

"Of a truth, Pedro, I think I prefer my own sterner clime in the North."

"Which proves that thou art a true Castilian," philosophized the esquire.

"As I am proud to be," added the master.

"Dost think Sir Manfred feels any such pride?"

"Not in Castile, I fear."

"Fear! How is that, Sir Guy? Dost fear on thine enemy's behalf?"

"Hush, Pedro. You mistake if you think I have enmity against Manfred. As God lives, I love him!"

"How?—Love him?"

"Yes."

"And have come all this way to fight him!"

"Because we could not fight in Castile. It is against the law."

"Aye,—I know the law; but I know not the law which calls upon a man to fight one whom he loves."

"Peace, good Pedro. It is as it is. The result is of my own inviting, and I must abide."

"But, as we were saying, my master,—it is evident that Manfred must feel a twinge of familiarity with the scenes which are so strange and uncongenial to you."

"How so?"

"Bother! Is it not true that the blood of the dusky Moor runs in his veins?"

"As it has run in the veins of some of the grandest men the world has seen," replied the Count.

Pedro looked up in astonishment.

"Santa Maria! And did you not forbid Sir Manfred to speak further with your fair cousin because of his Moorish taint?"

"No, good Pedro.—Hold! Let the matter drop where it is. Say no more. We must not enter Granada with a prejudice against Moorish blood. We will respect and esteem what is good and pure."

"And love what is beautiful," added Pedro.

"Yes," said Guy.

"And," pursued the esquire, "how if we find beautiful women? I have heard that some of the Granadan maidens are surpassingly fair."

"My heart is whole, Pedro."

"Just the worst kind of a heart to bring into such danger. By Our Lady! 'twould be a curious happening if the Count of St. Mark, who has withstood the glances of every bright eye in Castile, should surrender to the soft witchery of a Moslem maid!"

Guy smiled at the absurdity of the thought, and rode on without further remark.

Shortly after noon the travellers entered the city of Granada, and put up at comfortable inns, Guy finding lodgment on the street of St. Omar, beneath the roof of a worthy publican named Yezid, while Manfred found quarters with the publican Otello, on the adjacent street of Almanzor. The only restriction put upon strangers in Granada was, that they should lodge within prescribed limits; and, as may be supposed, these public-houses thus assigned were especially under the watchful eye of the royal guard.

When the day had passed, and the shades of evening had fallen upon the city, Guy of St. Mark called his esquire to him.

"Pedro, you know where Sir Manfred is lodged?"

"Yes, my lord."

"It is my desire to know if he will see me this evening."

"But, my lord, you are the challenged party. Should not the overture come from him?"

"I stand not upon such ceremony, Pedro. We are both challenged, and are both challengers. I am the oldest, and will make the advance. God knows the privilege is not a thankful one. I would see Manfred this evening if it is agreeable to him."

Without further remark Pedro departed upon his errand. He found Otello's inn, and also found Michael, to whom he communicated his errand.

"I will see my master," said the latter, "and learn his pleasure." He had taken two steps toward the door, when he stopped and turned.

"Pedro," he said, "if your master knew the heart of Sir Manfred he would not be so eager to push this thing."

"You mistake my master's motive," returned Pedro. "If he is in haste, it is only to be rid of a business that sits heavily upon him. It is your master who does not know the heart of Sir Guy."

"How is that, Pedro?"

"I will tell you how it is: Sir Guy swears that he both loves and honors your young lord; and when I would have spoken lightly of Sir Manfred's dusky cheek he stopped me with a frown and a reproof, and would have me to understand that he had room in his heart to love a Moor who was true and manly."

"Say ye so?" cried Michael, with kindling eye. "They are the very sentiments Sir Manfred expressed to me concerning Guy of St. Mark. Why should they fight?"

"Aye—why?" echoed Pedro.

"I know them well," pursued Michael. "They are both brave, and both gallant. We know what Sir Guy hath done in the field; and I can swear, of my own knowledge, that the stroke of Manfred, with sword or spear, is fearful. If they come together in the conflict of arms, one or both must die. After the first blow is stricken neither can retract."

"Perhaps," said Pedro, after a little reflection, "a knowledge of one another's real feelings may change their purpose. We will enlighten them."

"We will. I will give the word to Sir Manfred."

"And I to Sir Guy. And now go to your master with my errand."

Michael went and saw his master, and presently returned with word that Sir Manfred would be pleased to see Guy of St. Mark at the earliest opportunity.

With this answer Pedro returned to the inn of St. Omar, and shortly afterward Sir Guy was on his way to fulfil his appointment. He found Manfred alone in his chamber, and under the impulse of the old friendship he put forth his hand and smiled. Manfred returned the grasp and the smile, and there was no hypocrisy in his frank and handsome face.

They were a handsome pair, right noble and gallant both. Guy was a shade the tallest, and stout in proportion; but the beautiful symmetry of Manfred's lithe and comely form, and the strength that lurked in the slumbering fire of his dark and lustrous eyes, left no show of lack in manly vigor.

"Manfred," said Sir Guy, when they had seated themselves, "my good Pedro has deemed it necessary to in[illegible] me that you still hold me in your love. I needed not his assurance, for my love for you is so strong that I had already in my heart done you that justice. I think we understand one another on that point?"

"Pedro informed you truly, Sir Guy."

"And you believe that my love for you is not gone [illegible] taken your hand with a

"Right, Manfred. And now to business. Here in Granada we are free to settle our dispute as we will. The law of the Castilian king against duelling does not reach us. Do you still press your challenge?"

"First," answered Manfred, "I press my demand for an explanation of the foul slur you have cast upon my birth."

"I have meant no wrong to you, Manfred. I have meant simple justice to my fair cousin. There is doubt—"

"Hush!" cried Manfred. "Do not repeat the story. Will you tell me whence you obtained it?"

"I cannot."

"Do you realize that the breath which deprives me of honor also falls darkly upon my mother?"

"I am sorry, Manfred."

"And you will not retract?"

"I cannot."

"And you will not tell me how you came by the story?"

"Neither can I do that."

"Then," said Manfred, arising from his seat, "our friendship must henceforth put on the guise of enmity. I have but one course to pursue. You leave but one course open to me. I must protect my own character; and a thousand times more must I protect the fame of my mother. I therefore demand of you answer at the sword's point!"

"So be it, Manfred. At the sword's point will I maintain the integrity of my house as represented in my fair cousin."

"Ah, Guy," said the Knight of Alcala, with a faint smile, and with an admonishing shake of the head, "your cause is weak, for you have not the prayers of the fair lady in whose name you would battle. Her heart's fondest love is with me."

Guy's brow darkened.

"So much the more need is there," he cried, stamping his foot upon the floor, "of my striking in defence of her honor."

"Her honor, Sir Guy?"

"Aye. We may speak words of naked truth now. You force me to it, Manfred. You know that the blood of Sir Gomez runs not in your veins?"

"I know it. I have learned it within the month."

"And can you tell me who was your father?"

"I think he was a Moor."

"Of what condition?"

"I know not."

"I have nothing more to ask," said Guy, with a wave of the hand.

"And I," retorted Manfred, hotly, "have nothing more to explain in empty words. My life has been honorable, and King John's own hand did knight me. My position is good and loyal, and with my sword I will maintain it."

"Enough, Sir Manfred. We have but to settle upon the time and place."

"Thou art the challenged party. Any time and any place will suit me."

"Then," said Guy, "let us have done with it as soon as possible. Didst note an open glade by the river's bank, some three miles away, upon the edge of which a large oak had been uprooted as by a tornado?"

"Aye, I marked it well."

"Let us meet there on the morrow, when the sun is an hour high."

"So be it."

Guy had turned to depart when Manfred called him back.

"Sir Guy, I have a question to ask. Deem me not impertinent, and I will take thine answer, be it what it may, in good faith. Should I fall in the approaching conflict, and should'st thou come off alive and strong, will it be thine aim to win the love of Ida?"

"Not for my wife, Manfred. She would not so accept my love, nor is my heart so inclined. What might have been, had'st thou never come between us, I cannot say; but as it is, the future holds no such probability in store."

"I thank thee for thine answer, Guy. I shall strike with less bitterness for the knowing of this."

"And now," said Guy, "I have a question to ask of thee: Wilt thou walk abroad this evening?"

"The night is balmy and tempting. I had thought of it. Why do you ask?"

"Merely that I might give you a word of advice. Remember that we are in a strange city, and among a strange people. You may not realize how glaring is that jewel which you wear upon your bosom. Men have been slain in Castile for the winning of a bauble of far less price, and its intense gleaming may excite the cupidity of some man in Granada who would not hesitate to take a life for its possession."

"I will hide it," said Manfred, "but I will not remove it. My mother hung it about my neck, and told me it was a charm. I thank you for your hint all the same."

The jewel to which Guy had alluded was a five-pointed star which gleamed and flashed with the radiant light of a thousand stars combined. Its centre was a ruby of wondrous size and purity, of a fiery red color, flaming with a fervid glow as though from fires within its own mystic depths. The points of the star were formed of diamonds set in crusted gold, and they, catching and reflecting the beams of the ruby, scintillated with a hundred brilliant hues. The jewel was suspended about Manfred's neck by a chain of gold, and reached half way down the breast.

"It was your mother's?" said Guy thoughtfully.

"Yes. She gave it to me when she told me that I was the son of a husband who lived and loved her before she became the wife of Sir Gomez del Alcala. I hold it as doubly a talisman. My mother's hand bestowed it upon me, and I am sure my father wore it before I was born. Again I thank you for your caution."

Manfred lifted the glittering talisman and dropped it within the fold of his vest, and Guy, with a bow, turned away, muttering to himself as he went,—

"The man who could own that marvellous jewel could have been no common man—unless, indeed, he won it as a robber might win it now. Who knows?"

CHAPTER III.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE FOREST GLADE.

When Manfred had heard the last echo of Guy's retreating footsteps he bent his head in thought, and anon he paced to and fro across his chamber.

"I know not if I have been wise in this," he said, to himself. "Had I been in Guy's place, I might have done as he has done. This cloud upon my parentage grows darker with the wearing—"

"Then why not cast it off? Excuse me, my master, but I cannot bear to see you bowed beneath such a weight at such a time."

The knight turned and beheld his esquire.

"Ah, Michael, I would cast it off most gladly if I could."

"Why did you not demand to know the whole truth before you left Alcala?"

"Of whom?"

"Of your mother."

"My mother I dare not press; and yet I think she hath told me all she hath to tell. She hath feared not so much to tell me of my father as to confess her own ignorance. She married him when he was very young, and he died shortly after I was born. There was something painful in the manner of his death—something, I judge, mysterious. My mother can only hold my hands, and look into my face, and say to me that she firmly believes my father to have been an honest and upright man. More she will not say, and I think more she cannot say."

"Did she particularly assure you that he was an honest man?" asked the esquire.

"Aye,—she was earnest and emphatic upon that point."

Michael shrugged his shoulders, and was silent.

"How now, sirrah!" cried Manfred, catching the man's significant gesture. "What meaning hast thou in that silent shrug?"

"I can say only this, Sir Manfred,—and I speak not for myself alone: The jewel which you wear upon your neck is worth the ransom of an emperor. No ordinary man could ever have honestly possessed it. The ruby alone is by far the rarest gem in Spain. I have heard that such a bauble was once lost in Granada. If you are wise, my master, you will not let that wondrous star gleam upon Moorish eyes."

"By heaven! Michael, I cannot believe that any taint of wrong attaches to the possession of this jewel by my father. My mother, when she placed it about my neck, told me it was a sacred talisman; and I think my father told her the same. He told her to preserve it with religious reverence.—I will not believe it. I have no ground for distrusting my mother's word."

"Then why borrow trouble, master? As I said before,—throw off the cloud. Think no more of it. You have enough else to occupy your thoughts at present."

"You are right, Michael. I will take a stroll in the fresh air. I think the streets of Granada are safe."

"Safe enough for that. But I will follow in your steps."

"As you please."

Manfred buckled on his sword, and threw his light cloak over his shoulders, and went forth. A while he walked on in advance, but at length he stopped and allowed his esquire to come up with him.

"Michael, you are acquainted in Granada?"

"Somewhat."

"I would like to walk toward the Alhambra. Can you lead the way?"

"I can if the gates are open."

They moved on in the new direction, and finding the gates in question open, and no impediment offered to their passage, they passed through and began the ascent of the paved and terraced slopes leading to the royal palace. They had reached a point near to the wall of the outer court of the kingly residence when they stopped and turned to look back upon the city that lay at their feet. Upon their right hand was a grove of olive trees, and upon their left was an angle of the wall in which was an arch with a gate of brazen bars. As they stopped they heard voices upon the opposite side of the wall. Michael drew his master more closely under the shadow of the masonry, and intimated to him to be silent.

"We may as well avoid observation," he whispered.

He had no thought of listening to the voices in the court; but they reached his ear, nevertheless, and he could not but hear.

"All is prepared," said the first voice; "and if we are bold we shall succeed. A single blow may do the work."

"Aye," said the second voice, "and the first blow must be a sure one. You will strike it."

And our listeners heard the first voice answer,—

"I will strike home, never fear. And if I succeed—"

"If you succeed," broke in the second voice, "your reward shall be even greater than I have yet promised. I will see that he is separated from his followers,—I will contrive that he shall be left alone—"

"And I," added the first voice, "will take care of the rest. I think we understand one another."

The second voice answered,—

"Perfectly. And now let us down into the lower city and make a night of it. I care not to sleep."

Directly after this the brazen gate was opened, and two men came forth. They were turbaned Moors, tall and stout, and he who had first emerged from the arch wore heavy trimming of gold upon his jacket, and a jewelled crescent gleamed upon his turban.—They did not speak again, but having closed and secured the gate they moved quickly and silently away.

"By my life!" cried Michael, when they had gone, "there go a precious pair of rascals."

"I believe you," returned Manfred.

"They are plotting for an assassination."

"Nothing less, surely."

"And their voices betray them to be cold-blooded villains. By San Dominic! I wish I had a clue to their secret. We might save a worthy man."

"Aye," responded Manfred regretfully, "we might if we only knew. But this concerns not us. The event is beyond our reach. Thanks, however, to the rising moon for showing me the garb of the chief plotter. I think I should know him again should I ever see him."

"You think he was the chief?"

"Aye. His step gave ample token thereof. The other man followed him."

"Right, my master. I marked him well."

"And you, too, would know him, Michael?"

"Certainly."

"And you may have opportunity to see him; but I—I—have other business."

"For which you will need a stout heart and a steady hand; so invite no moody spell. Have you no business to leave with me before you go forth to-morrow?"

"Yes, Michael; and we will return and attend to it."

They reached their inn without further adventure, where the knight arranged and gave into the hands of his esquire the business which might require attention in case he should fall in the approaching conflict, after which master and man retired. Michael, who lay upon a mattress of straw on the floor, slept soundly; but not so the knight upon his easier bed. He dreamed continually of fighting—now in the glade by the river's side, and anon by the angle of the wall of the court of the Alhambra,—but Guy of St. Mark was not his opponent in these phantom conflicts. The man who appeared against him, and who strove mightily for his life, was the turbaned Moor of the gold-laced jacket and the jewelled crescent. And now, in his dreams, Manfred beheld the man's features as though in living reality; and he heard that voice again—the voice of the second speaker,—and it seemed that he himself was the designated victim of the assassin's plot.

Manfred awoke, and slept again—slept only to dream the self-same dream once more—to dream it in every particular as before. He arose in the morning oppressed by the strange incubus, and Michael was forced to the exercise of great ingenuity to withdraw him from the moody fit. A cup of warm wine with an egg served the knight for the early meal, and as he began to prepare for the expedition his spirits grew less burdensome. He donned a fine shirt of mail—not the one with alternate links of gold, but one in which every link was of the finest tempered steel of Milan,—and for his head he took a velvet cap with a skull-piece inside of steel. Thus his upper body was protected; but as he was to fight on foot he chose not to cumber his lower limbs.

The sun was just rising above the mountain tops when Michael brought the horses to the door of the inn, and with the simple remark to their host that they were only going out for fresh air and exercise, they rode away.

It was an open glade, in a retired valley of the Darro. The silvery river flowed on beneath the shadows of giant oaks, while upon the other hand, where the glade sloped up to a hill-side, was a dense forest which offered rare sport to the huntsman. Sir Guy and his esquire were already upon the ground when Manfred arrived, and with but little ceremony the knights alighted, as did the attendants, allowing the horses to follow the bent of their own inclinations, being sure that the well-trained, faithful animals would not wander far away, and would come at a call.

"I know not," said Guy of St. Mark, as he approached his antagonist, "as there is need of further preliminaries. You have cast down the gauntlet, and I have accepted the gage."

"You should go back of that," returned Manfred. "The first gage was your own."

"How so?" demanded St. Mark.

"In that you did strike mine honor," replied de Alcala, with some warmth. "To the lady of my love you sought to traduce me."

"Nay, Manfred. Thou canst not say that."

"Cannot?" repeated the Knight of Alcala, hotly. "Call you not the doubts you would have cast upon my name—upon my birth—upon my mother—call you not that traducing? By heaven! Sir Guy, but thou hast a ready way of slipping the leash!"

A bright spot appeared upon Guy's either cheek as he answered,—

"Enough. I am here to answer in full; and may the right appear in the issue. I trust that we have both prepared for the bitterest result."

"I have prepared for the worst."

"It is well, and we will waste no further time. Let us fight where we stand. We cannot find better ground."

They threw off their cloaks, and also removed their baldrics, and stood, sword in hand, face to face. They were certainly a right gallant pair, and the experienced captain, seeking a soldier upon whose arm to cast the chance of a battle, would have hesitated which of the two to choose. The choice might have fallen upon Guy, as he seemed the stouter and the cooler; but the keen, subtle fire of Manfred's dark eye, and the elastic grace of his lithe and agile form, gave token of qualities that might be relied upon.

The sun had been rising higher and higher, and a ray of golden light fell athwart the sward as the knights advanced to the conflict. They had crossed their swords, and were gathering force and direction for the onset, when their attention was arrested by a cry in the forest near at hand. They wished not to be interrupted, nor cared they to have stranger witnesses to their encounter, so they dropped the points of their weapons and listened.

"Some passing huntsman, I think," said Guy, after they listened a time without hearing a repetition of the cry. "I am told that certain game in this forest is most readily captured at early dawn. Shall we proceed?"

Manfred nodded, and the swords were crossed again. But the fates were against them,—or, at least, against their combat. Not a dozen strokes had been made and parried when the cry was heard again, this time louder than before, and nearer at hand.

"Hark!" said Manfred, dropping the point of his sword. "That sounds like the call of one in distress."

Even as he spoke the cry came again—"*Help! Help!*" It issued from a point directly back from the river, near to the edge of the forest, and was evidently the cry of a man in deep distress. Guy and Manfred exchanged looks.

The cry sounded again, and now was heard the clash of arms.

"Santiago!" cried Manfred. "We will look to that first."

"To the rescue!" answered Guy.

And without further delay they rushed toward the spot whence issued the clang of conflict, followed closely by their esquires. They reached a narrow dell, where two huge chestnuts overhung their branches like an arch, and, beneath the deep shadows of the place, this was what they saw:

A man upon horseback was surrounded by six armed men who were seeking to bring him down. The horseman was a Moor of noble mien, of middle-age, and clad in a hunting garb of choicest texture. He had dropped his boar-spear, and was trying to keep his assailants at bay with his sword; but his strength was failing him, and those who attacked him from behind were pushing swiftly toward a consummation of their murderous purpose.

"Hold!" cried a voice from behind an adjacent thicket of underbrush. "Go not there!"

Neither Manfred nor Guy heeded the interruption; but Michael, who brought up the rear, recognized the cavalier of the tinselled jacket and the jewelled crescent—the same whom he had seen pass out from the court of the Alhambra on the previous evening. He took in the situation at a glance. This was the chief plotter, hiding from sight of the victim, while his tools did the work of assassination. And this man darted out into the path and held the esquire at bay.

"Whither now?" he demanded.

"To give succor where it is needed," replied Michael.

"Pass not. Hold where you are. You go to your death in there."

"I go, nevertheless."

"We shall see!"

And upon this the Moor raised his sword, and the esquire struck it down.

Meantime Guy and Manfred, followed by Pedro, had hurried forward to the assistance of the beleagured horseman. To their knightly understanding a fellow-creature thus outnumbered was deserving of their succor; and, moreover, the horseman appeared more of the gentleman than did the ruffians who surrounded him. It may have been a feeling of gladness at relief from their late contest, or it may have been but a feeling natural to the occasion; but, be the cause what it may, they went at the work before them with a ready zeal of strength and application that quickly attracted the attention of those upon whom their blows were aimed.

"How now, dogs!" cried Manfred, as he closed in the fray. "Do six of you set upon one man? Out upon thee!" And he struck down a ruffian who had turned toward him.

The horseman, seeing himself thus reinforced, hastened to leap from his saddle; and as Manfred and Guy had each slain a man, only four of the assailants were left to four antagonists; for good Pedro was at hand, and eager for the fray.

Manfred had stricken down one man, as we have seen, and directly afterward he was set upon by a stout warrior who wielded a sabre of immense size and weight.

"Dog of a Christian! take that for thy pains!"

Manfred parried the furious blow, but the sound of the voice for the instant withdrew his attention. It was the first voice of the preceding night—the voice of the assassin who had promised to strike the decisive blow! And thus strangely was the Knight of Alcala approaching a solution of the mystery! The thought dazed him for the instant, and before he could recover he dodged a blow which he could not parry. He saved his head, at which the blow had been aimed, but caught it on the left shoulder. The keen, heavy blade cut through the meshes of the mail, and found its way into the flesh; but the giant was not to repeat the stroke, for Manfred, when he found that the blow must fall, drew back his own weapon, and, with lightning-like swiftness, plunged it into the foeman's bosom. He shook the man from his blade, and saw him fall, and then turned to see that the battle had been won. Three of the ruffians had bitten the dust, and three had fled into the forest. He saw the Moor whom they had saved—saw that he wore a grand, majestic look—and then he felt a faintness coming over him, and he called for Michael.

But Michael did not come, and Guy of St. Mark caught the fainting man in his arms, and laid him gently upon the sward.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

GRANDMA'S DARLING.

When we reflect that wild children often grow up to be steady men, and when we look back into the early morning of our own lives, and call to mind the flighty freaks into which our childish passions often led us, we may bless the old lady who, in the fulness of her dear good heart, thus apostrophized her grandchild:

"O! he's a precious little fellow. I know he has his little failings,—we are none of us perfect,—but I do so enjoy his innocent freaks. Only to think of his putting the old cat into the fire; and throwing his grandfather's wig down into the cistern; and sticking his daddy's powder-horn into the stove; and tying the new tin coffee-pot to Jowler's tail; and setting off squibs in the barn; and getting my lace pad for a football; and taking my bobbin thread for a fish line. And, would you believe it,—only yesterday he built a fire of some of his uncle John's new shingles out in the sheep-yard, and then caught the old speckled hen and tried to roast her. O, bless his dear heart! He'll make something smart when he grows up!"

C.

WIT AND HUMOR.

An Amusing Illustration.—A female teacher of a school that stood on the banks of a quiet English stream, once wished to communicate to her pupils an idea of faith. While she was trying to explain the meaning of the word, a small covered boat glided in sight along the stream. Seizing upon the incident for an illustration, she exclaimed, "If I were to tell you that there is a leg of mutton in that boat, you would believe me, wouldn't you, even without seeing it yourselves?" "Yes, ma'am," replied the scholars. "Well, that is faith," said the schoolmistress. The next day, in order to test their recollection of the lesson, she inquired, "What is faith?" "A leg of mutton in a boat!" was the answer shouted from all parts of the school-room.

A young man, of melancholy countenance, recently deposited a package of letters in an express office for transmission to a certain lady. "What 's the value of this package?" asked the clerk, poising his pen. "Only a few weeks ago," huskily answered the disconsolate youth, "I considered it worth four hundred thousand dollars, but now my hopes are blasted, and it 's not worth more than five cents a pound."

"See here, you folks," said an agent of a row of tenement houses in the Sixth Ward, to a number of the tenants—"see here, I've news for you; your landlord is going to raise your rent." "The Lord bless the old darling!" exclaimed one of the women. "I was just a thinking how I was going to raise my rent for myself, and now here he sends us word that he 's a going to raise it for all of us!"

Our Advantage over European Powers.—"Mr. President," said a U. S. Senator the other day in debate, "the honorable gentleman who has just taken his seat, says that England and Prussia have got torpedoes which can blow a navy sky-high. But that's nothing to us, Sir. It can't affect us; for, Sir, *we have no navy* to blow sky-high."

A Parisian marriage advertisement reads: "A lady of eighteen, with a fortune of two million of francs, educated, well born, and of amiable disposition, would like to enter into marriage with a *young* gentleman of equal fortune, and not *over sixty years of age!*" Some old fool will be caught by that delicate flattery of his sixty years.

"Do you execute this deed without any fear or compulsion of your husband?" asked a commissioner of deeds of a woman whose acknowledgment of a deed he was taking. "Fear of my *husband!*" exclaimed the irate lady. "*He—compel—me!* You 're a fool!" And she swept indignantly from the commissioner's office.

French Revenge on Germany.—A French widow won ninety thousand dollars of a German gambler at Baden-Baden, and a French General, whose hatred of Germany is undying, married the widow and pocketed the German dollars.

A young lady, in Philadelphia, claiming the usual reduction made to clergymen on sewing machines, was asked, "On what grounds, Miss?" "Because," she blushingly replied, "I am engaged to a theological student."

A Warning to Smokers.—It has been definitely ascertained by scientific men that poison enough is taken into the system by a habitual smoker to cause death in one hundred and fifty-seven years.

"Let go that jib there!" sang out a Yankee captain, in a squall, to a new hand. "Do you hear me? Let go that jib!" "Why, blast yer pictur, I an't a touchin' your jib!" was the indignant response.

Pa and Ma.—Why is the letter *d* like a squalling brat? Because it makes Ma mad. Why is the letter *y* like a young spendthrift? Because it makes Pa pay.

An Arkansas editor says, "There will be five eclipses this year—two of the sun, two of the moon, and one of our political opponents."

A bachelor having advertised for a wife to share his lot, an "Anxious Inquirer" solicited information as to the size of said lot.

Why are Indian servants called coolies? Probably because their principal duty is to fan their masters in the heat of the day.

By industry, perseverance, honesty and economy one can make progress even in a stationery business.

Why is the letter *m* like a man who feeds on fish? Because it makes *meals of eels*.

About the finest thing we have ever found, either in town or out of town, is—dust.

Why should the male sex avoid the letter *a*? Because it makes men mean.

The best time to cut corn is when it aches.

CURRENT ITEMS.

A poor young man in St. John's, Newfoundland, recently married a girl seemingly as poor as himself, with whom he had fallen desperately in love. After the marriage, the bride astonished her husband by informing him that she had £1,000,000—five millions of dollars—in her own right, which she would divide with him.

The lumbermen of the North-east, and also of the North-west, have done better this winter than for many years before, on account of the steady and long continued cold weather, which has kept the swamps frozen, and afforded snow enough to enable them to haul out their logs.

An aged widow lady, whose husband left her a large amount of Erie stock—that constituted nearly his entire estate—on which she has received no dividend for several years, recently went insane on account of depression of mind and mental trouble, occasioned by the loss of her income.

A boy in Bushnell, Ill., had his leg broken in a singular manner the other day. He was standing cross-legged, talking with a school-mate, when another boy thoughtlessly jumped upon his back and crushed him to the ground, breaking his leg below the knee.

A little boy, aged seven years, of Statesburgh, N. Y., was riding down hill with his brother, when becoming cold he started for home. While on the way he ran or slipped into an uncovered well, in which he was found dead about fifteen minutes afterward.

The Italian government has proposed a convention with other European governments to devise means of protecting birds from destruction. What a change in the spirit of old world governments such a proposition indicates!

The highest average pay of school-teachers in the State of Massachusetts is paid in Boston, and is $67.72 a month. The lowest is in the town of New Ashford, where the teachers' salaries average only $16 a month.

On Sunday of last week forty-[illegible] converts were baptized in Jefferson[illegible], over a thousand spectators assembled on the [illegible] of the river to witness the performance of the baptismal rite.

In West Davenport, Iowa, a family recently lost two of their seven children by scarlet fever, and on the week following the fever attacked the other children, when three of them died within the same hour.

A Yankee has invented a sort of shampooing process for cleaning carpets, whereby the wear and tear occasioned by shaking and beating them is avoided, and the colors come out as bright as new.

California papers report the death of an old Mexican woman, who was one hundred and thirty-two years of age. She was thirty-six years old when the Declaration of Independence was made.

The parents of a little girl seven years old, living in New Haven, allowed her to play with a lighted candle, and she set her clothes on fire, and was burned so badly that she died in a few hours.

There is said to be a county in Iowa which contains two hundred and seventy-seven thousand acres, on which there is not a single tree. That is a big county, but it is hardly as big as the story.

Two little girls in Anamosa, Iowa, were pulling at opposite ends of a string, when the string broke, and one of them fell backward into a tub of boiling water, and was scalded to death.

A wine-maker in California recently gave a ball, where the dancing was done in one of his wine tanks, in which there was room for a set of dancers, a band, and twenty spectators.

London, with a population of three millions, has only nine daily newspapers—five morning and four evening; while Paris has twenty, New York twenty-four.

A man in good circumstances, sixty [illegible] years old, committed suicide in the town of [illegible]hill, Mass., a few evenings ago, for fear of [illegible] to want.

Chicago's wooden pavements seem to have been more durable than any other kind. It is said that none of them have had to be relaid.

The dead letters returned to Washington last year contained three million dollars in drafts, etc.

Texas raised and sold a million bushels of pecan nuts last year.

THE FROZEN MILL WHEEL.

BY NATHAN D. CHENEY.

The frozen froth of the mill-race binds
The head of the stream with an icy wreath,
And the mighty wheel of the old mill hangs
While bound to the teeth.

Husked is the valve that was wont to send
Through the woods its deep melodious roar,
And the brook beneath is trained and still,
As it shall wake no more.

And all the miller's cottage, above the mill,
Is dumb and desolate;
Since the clever girl-beauty, its flower and pride,
In the distant city went.

For thither her copious accounts came,
Of the fortune that to her fame befalls.
That her pure complexion, and health and life
May freshen their stupid halls.

For, she's a bird in a gilded cage,
Where they also glitter for the netting days
That shall loosen the wires of the old mill wheel
Through all the woodland ways.

Hasto, haste, O Spring! on the swallow's wing,
From emerald glade and South sea shore,
And bring the elixir of river and dew,
And all the skill wicked rear;

That never the land, by tower and town,
Through the city that sits by the wains see
Its ancient mill pond, like a desolate prayer,
To call our wood bird home.

The forests will fresh buds bear and no more,
And the gilded aviaries shoot as she passes them
And
Till the rapturous voice of her fresh young soul
Is uttered with the mill's wild tune.

BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

By MRS. SOUTHWORTH,

AUTHOR OF "THE HIDDEN HAND," "SELF-MADE," "THE BROTHERS," ETC.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

THE BETTER EXILE.

Beside, long travel, want or woe,
Soon change with time and fate we know;
For nearer hast our time eclipse,
And nearer as the planets near,
Till narrower man comes face to face,
And greet on earth the ever bright grace;
Then hearts with hearts delight shall keep,
Made pure by love in Heaven.

"VICTOR HARTMAN!" exclaimed Mr. Lyle, in a tone of astonishment that did not spring from his chair and grasped both the hands of the traveler and shook them heartily.—"Victor Hartman! My dear friend, I am glad to see you—and so glad that you have reserved a dozen," he continued, dragging forward a chair and forcing the visitor into it.

"But I never should have known you again," he concluded, gazing at the handsome, but bronzed, gray, tall, broad-shouldered man before him.

"I am much changed," answered the stranger, in a deep mellifluous voice, that reminded the hearer of summer storms and streams.

"Changed! Why, you left us a mere stripling! I mean to say a mature man. To all appearance, you have left us a mere boy, and now you have grown away, and the minister, still gazing upon the stranger.

"And yet the time has been long enough, indeed I have lived much in that period," said the traveler, with the same rich, deep tone, and with a smile that rendered his whole face bright and handsome for the moment.

"Well, I am delighted to see you. But how is it that I have this joyful surprise?" inquired the minister.

"When you know, you would not, and why did I not write? Because I thought I was coming so fast, Hartman, with a sad smile. "Well, I will explain. When I got your letter acknowledging the receipt of the last remittance I sent to you for my children, I learned for the first time that some letter that my boy would graduate at the Commencement, and hoped in the highest honours of his college. Well a steamer was to sail for home in a few days. I thought I would take to myself the Commencement and see my boy take his degree. So I packed my trunk in an hour, embarked in the *New York*, in another hour, and here I am."

"That was prompt. Where did you arrive?"

"Our steamer reached New York on Thursday noon. I took the night train for Washington, where I arrived at ten on Friday morning. I took the morning boat for Agnia Falls, and the train for Elmwood and Cedarbridge, and here about noon."

"And you have not seen your protegee?"

"Yes, I have seen my protegee. She is better twice to-day. I knew him by his likeness to his unfortunate father. But I will not detain myself known to him. I do not intend to do so, at least at present."

"Why not?"

"Why not?" echoed Hartman sorrowfully. "Ah! would he not shrink from me in disgust and horror, if he knew?"

"No you would not. You would the awful injustice that has been done you."

"But if he were told, would he believe it? We have no proof that any injustice has been done me, except those anonymous letters and the word of that strange horseman who waylaid me on my tramp and robbed me of all but my hands with the words, 'You never intended to kill Henry Lyttelton, you never killed him. Some one else intended to kill him and you saved me the trouble.'

"I have never ever heard anything more of that mysterious horseman?"

"Not one word."

"Have you no suspicion of his identity?"

"Some forged the strongest suspicion that I feel that he himself was the homicide, and the writer of the anonymous letters."

"Well, I cannot tell you why, but I always felt persuaded of your innocence, and expected the coming of those anonymous letters, and even what they were about assuming yourself."

"You knew it from intuition—inward teaching."

"May I ask you, Hartman, why, after you discovered that you had escaped the charge of the death of Henry Lytton, you still determined to burden yourself with the existence and education of his children—a duty that was undertaken by you in a moment of time an irreparable injury you supposed you had done him?"

"Why I still resolved to care for them after I knew that I had not killed him, was from a great love I had for a certain tall boy. Perhaps—partly because I was so much alone in the world, and had no one to love and care for, and there is a sense that was common to us all, as boys at school, and to hope that some day they might come to look upon me as a friend, instead of with horror. And when I took so much pride in talking to my brother misses about my son at the University, and my daughter at the Academy! And then, again, your letters every one of them told me of the progress my children made, and the credit they were doing me. I tell you, sir, all this was a great comfort to me, and made me feel at home in the most lonesome wilds, and the exile less wearying."

"Hartman, you have a noble soul! You must have made a very great pecuniary sacrifice for the sake of those young people," said the quiet minister.

"No, sir; no sacrifice at all. That was the strangest part of it; for it seemed to me the more I gave, the more I had."

"How was that?"

"I don't know how it was, sir; but such was the fact. But I will tell you what I do know."

"Yes, tell me, Hartman."

"You may remember, Mr. Lyle, that when I told you I was going back to California, I explained to you that I knew a place where I felt sure money was to be made."

"Yes, I remember."

"Well, sir, the place was a gully at the foot of a certain spur of the mountains, called the Devil's Cleft. Now, sir, I will tell you a little of geology. I know more now. Also, I had had but little opportunity in mining, and, moreover, whenever I mentioned Red Ridge I was simply laughed at by my mates. I was laughed over by digging the place a fair trial. Before I left the Devil's Cleft, the ridge of the mountain hidden in the gully at the foot of Red Ridge, was exposed, and the gold nuggets and gold dust I was digging me to go back there and dig. So I went back and resumed my teaching. When I went to California, I made for Red Ridge. Sir, when I first went to Red Ridge, I dug. Night weeks without finding gold. That was the time my mates laughed at me. When I next went back—the time I now speak of—I worked four hours and then struck—struck, one of the best paying mines in the Gold State. It is worked by a company now, but I have half of all that is sunk.

"I have been wonderfully blessed and prospered, Hartman."

"Yes," said the traveller, reverently bowing his head; "for that sake, Lord!"

"And for your own, I trust, Hartman."

"Mr. Lyle—"

"Well, Hartman."

"May I ask you a favor?"

"Certainly you may."

"You addressed all your letters to me under the name of Joseph Brent."

"Certainly, at your request."

"Continue, then, to call me Joseph Brent. That name is known by act of legislature."

"Yes, and I have a still better claim. In was the name of my grandfather on my mother's father. It was also the name of his eldest son, my uncle, who died recently a bachelor in the State of Missouri, and left me his farm there, on condition that I should take his name. I was more anxious to have his name than his estate. So I applied to the legislature, and the name that I had borrowed so long was confirmed to me by law."

"I am so interested you put to my young friends as Mr. Joseph Brent."

"Yes, sir; if you please, I will be so."

Victor Hartman sank quietly into the grave, and do not let them know that I am Victor Hartman, or that Joseph Brent was ever their benefactor."

"I will keep your counsel as to your identity, Hartman, but I cannot see why you should wish to keep your self in the dark as to these young people as it is to me."

"Why, sir, I have a great affection for the children!"

"I remember, after the ceremonies are concluded. But, my friend, it is a little strange that you should call these young people your own children, when you yourself can be set them free from all claim."

"Mr. Lyle, I am a man who has known suffering, thought, how much else! I am then a man who has known suffering, thought, how much else! I am then a man who has known suffering, thought, how much else! I am then

NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, Editor and Proprietor

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 1872.

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ROBERT BONNER, Publisher,
Corner of William and Spruce Sts., New York.

A Disgraceful Proceeding.

The following recently appeared as a special dispatch in the New York *Evening Post:*

"Washington, March 4.—Mr. Shultz, of the firm of Shultz & Vom Baur, Custom House brokers, of this city, appeared before the Ways and Means Committee the morning to complain of the manner in which his business had been assailed and examined last Friday by the Custom House officials, at the instance of an unscrupulous competitor.

If merchants, doing a regular business, are liable to have their books overhauled by the emissaries of the Internal Revenue Department, or the Custom House, on the mere statement of an anonymous letter, things have come to such a pass that a radical change is demanded.

It was against just such seizures as this that Patrick Henry warned his countrymen, if they should consent to the adoption of a Constitution without a Bill of Rights, which should contain the essential principles of Magna Charta, the consentaneous of its execution, and those of his great conquerors, and in obedience to the general demand of the people of all sections, almost as soon as the constitution of the United States had been ratified, certain amendments were made to it, among which was the following:

"Article IV.—The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."

It is not a search upon an anonymous letter an unreasonable search? Has not the plain letter of the Constitution been violated in spirit?

It is to be hoped that a system of taxation and revenue may be devised and adopted and when such will require the employment of the myriad of public officers who now violate the rights and prey upon the substance of the people. The smaller the number of public officers, the better for the people, and the more satisfactory for the taxes as well as of important of obedience which is intolerable. Let Congress abolish their sinecures and send them back into private life to labor for a living.

"Spies are like dogs; you can't do much," said a wise statesman. This country is governed a good deal too much, and the people have a too many petty, insignificant and contemptible officers over them at present.

Limit Your Wants, Young Men.

Lord Bolingbroke, in his "Reflections upon Exile," says: "Our natural and real wants are confined to narrow bounds, while those which fancy and custom create are extended to none."

Young men who are just entering upon life, and forming the habits which are likely to adhere to them to its close, will do well to treasure up in memory the wise and instructive words of one of England's finest writers and most philosophical statesmen.

"Our natural and real wants are confined to narrow bounds." It is surprising how little it is that is absolutely essential to man's existence, and how little of what is necessary and considerable view of life, to his comfort and happiness. Intellectual enjoyments are comparatively cheap. The storehouses of the mind, which affords the highest and the only enduring satisfaction, may be pursued as an income quite insignificant for the supply of luxuries.

Our physical wants are very few, if we preserve our simplicity, as they were are by nature. To eat, to drink, to exercise, to sleep, to keep warm and to be sheltered—a small sum will supply all these necessities. The necessaries which are not so much which tend to our improvement, are within the reach of almost every one.

But the wants which fancy and custom create, as Lord Bolingbroke well says, are confined to no bounds. It is against these that young men on the threshold of life should sedulously guard. Beware of luxuries and of indulgences which are not needful, and these may cost you much or be purchased at a price which, if given to intellectual cultivation, would be far more conducive to success. It is easy to do without that which you have never indulged in, but hard to leave off habits, however extravagant and absurd. When you are to decide about adopting a mode or style of living, consider well whether it is likely to be a permanent inconvenience, you will be able always to procure it. The only safe rule is, to keep your wants within moral bounds.

Dexter is 2:16.

The Turf, Field and Farm of June 16, 1871,—before Mr. Bonner purchased Dexter—said of him:

"The little Hambletonian covered himself with honor, as he trotted one mile in 2 minutes, and 17 seconds, the best time by several seconds ever made by a stallion."

Shoeing Horses—The Importance of Being is in the Right Way.

Our attention was long ago attracted to the importance of having horses properly shod.

One of the earliest improvements which we adopted in shoeing consisted in cutting open the heels. This we learned from a Canadian. It was a good idea, but a crude one, and we have now abandoned it, having got from another source a substitute which produces the same effect, and is better.

A man, in order to gain a perfect or even considerable knowledge of the horse's foot, should have no prejudice, either way, for or against any source of information. He should be prepared to learn anything that he can from anybody who knows it.

We have purchased and read and studied all the books treating of the horse's foot, which were to be had anywhere. Such as we could not obtain in this country we have imported. Yet we are constantly acquiring new and additional lights on the matter, and being free from predilections on the subject, we most unreservedly publish whatever we learn on point or another.

On the whole, now, we are enabled to direct the shoeing of our own stable of horses variously to our own satisfaction from time to time. Still, we hope to acquire as much more information as we already have, and a great deal must always depend on personal judgment and discretion in the shoeing of the foot to best ascertained general principles.

It is not complicated matter, but it is nevertheless a fact, that roughness, sparing, the heels, "hitching," etc., etc., all arise from a defective shoeing of the foot. The proper shoeing is the scientific one. The foot should be pared down so that the frog will bear its proper share of the weight, and the heels will be equally balanced. The shoe should be so formed as to be trouble with any of the complaints we have mentioned. Such is the importance of good shoeing.

But the reader is probably ready to ask, how ought a horse to be shod? We will answer in this way: We have a horse in our own stable that we would shoe precisely alike; measurement, in every way, and yet the one requires shoeing. At the present time, however, but little progress in our studies, we have discovered nothing more than that shoeing the heels and cutting down the foot; but we have since that time, as we have already intimated, found out "a more excellent way," which we now pursue.

Lameness is not confined, as many people think, to horses of high blood. It is found in a number of years. Last autumn we saw several horses lame, which were not of high blood, and were perfect strangers to the track. "Never been shod! At Cornac, Long Island, Mr. Harry Hunt, who has one of the best farmers ranked—and deservedly so—as a leading horseman, of Middle County, called our attention to a little colt, only six months old, that was a perfect cripple—could not walk—and yet neither Mr. Hunt nor any one in the neighborhood knew what was the matter with the animal. Upon examination, a splinter of bone was found in the white-bone and others that the Custom House, on the mere statement of an anonymous letter, things have come to such a pass that a radical change is demanded.

It was against just such seizures as this that Patrick Henry warned his countrymen, if they should consent to the adoption of a Constitution without a Bill of Rights, which should contain the essential principles of Magna Charta, the consentaneous of its execution, and those of his great conquerors, and in obedience to the general demand of the people of all sections, almost as soon as the constitution of the United States had been ratified, certain amendments were made to it, among which was the following:

"Article IV.—The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."

It not a search upon an anonymous letter an unreasonable search? Has not the plain letter of the Constitution been violated in spirit?

It is to be hoped that a system of taxation and revenue may be devised and adopted and when such will require the employment of the myriad of public officers who now violate the rights and prey upon the substance of the people. The smaller the number of public officers, the better for the people, and the more satisfactory for the taxes as well as of important of obedience which is intolerable. Let Congress abolish their sinecures and send them back into private life to labor for a living.

"Spies are like dogs; you can't do much," said a wise statesman. This country is governed a good deal too much, and the people have too many petty, insignificant and contemptible officers over them at present.

Limit Your Wants, Young Men.

Lord Bolingbroke, in his "Reflections upon Exile," says: "Our natural and real wants are confined to narrow bounds, while those which fancy and custom create are extended to none."

Young men who are just entering upon life, and forming the habits which are likely to adhere to them to its close, will do well to treasure up in memory the wise and instructive words of one of England's finest writers and most philosophical statesmen.

"Our natural and real wants are confined to narrow bounds." It is surprising how little it is that is absolutely essential to man's existence, and how little of what is necessary and considerable view of life, to his comfort and happiness. Intellectual enjoyments are comparatively cheap. The storehouses of the mind, which affords the highest and the only enduring satisfaction, may be pursued as an income quite insignificant for the supply of luxuries.

Our physical wants are very few, if we preserve our simplicity, as they were are by nature. To eat, to drink, to exercise, to sleep, to keep warm and to be sheltered—a small sum will supply all these necessities. The necessaries which are not so much which tend to our improvement, are within the reach of almost every one.

But the wants which fancy and custom create, as Lord Bolingbroke well says, are confined to no bounds. It is against these that young men on the threshold of life should sedulously guard. Beware of luxuries and of indulgences which are not needful, and these may cost you much or be purchased at a price which, if given to intellectual cultivation, would be far more conducive to success. It is easy to do without that which you have never indulged in, but hard to leave off habits, however extravagant and absurd. When you are to decide about adopting a mode or style of living, consider well whether it is likely to be a permanent inconvenience, you will be able always to procure it. The only safe rule is, to keep your wants within moral bounds.

DISAGREEABLE LIBERTIES.—THE MONTH THAT TAKES THEM.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

March is here. It reaches out long hands, which no one can escape, to greet us. It is the most turbulent and disagreeable libertine with eyes and arms; it pries into every nook and place, pooping through crack and nudging through crevice with its vexatious violence and pert egotism, saying, in every possible way, "Spring has arrived. March, you know, your old friend March; I am he. How glad I am to see you again! Let me embrace you and kiss you! Dear me, what are those tears in your eyes? How rosy your cheeks are! What a pity you handle yourselves up for in so many clothes! Winter is gone. I am come. I am the first come of the long line of months," etc., etc.

Now, March, as it said with all respect for the alliance, is a nuisance! It takes on airs. Flaunting in its gaudy dress of lion and lamb, it is impudent, impertinent, and a concealed malicious hypocrite. By fair speeches it tempts unwary and too confiding creatures to the north, and then, winking at the sheriff called "April," turns down on them all, and clutches them with icy hands.

We have had a fine first week in March now! A friend in Florida writes that the thermometer there has stood at eighty degrees, on Brooklyn Heights, on that veritable city, and Jersey City, and Hoboken, it has been at zero! And March—the fiend—the first is the old trick of politicians—one thing for one, and another for another, by underhand work.

I am tired of it. I hate its harsh winds. We have had enough of them already. My lungs are clapped, my skin is chilled. I hear of one from whom it has taken the voice, and another is coughing. We cannot keep the house warm. The fire burns, and burns, and burns, and yet it is not enough. The cellar is a tiger that is locked up with coal. The ferry-boats grind plaints we have endured between Jersey City and

"WELCOME, LITTLE STRANGER."

BY A DISPLACED THREE-YEAR-OLD.

Mamma brought a baby,
Just as I knew she would;
But I have could just him
From my rubber ring.
Ain't he awful ugly?
Ain't he awful pink?
I'm sorry mamma down from Heaven,"
That's a fib, I think.

Isabel Gray.

I wonder what he's for?
Mamma dug a hole in the garden,
And put him down her sick;
Mamma stays my bedroom—
Guess he came from her sick;
Pretty him is so quiet,
If I can, right quick.

Cuddle him and love him!
Don't want me to, mamma mine!
Don't want me if he stay sat
Get a bit of sitting
Send me off with Biddy
Every single day.

I'm a good boy, Charley,
Shall I stay and play?"

"Bids I could so bother him!"
No, I mean I so sore!
Nasey crying, I see,
Not get me bed,
Get all my bites kisses,
Get my place in lap.
Mean to take my dream-dog,
And not let me touch!

MARK HEBER'S LUCK;

OR,

Life on the Plains.

By LYNN LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOY MARSHAL," "RED KNIFE," "WITH SHERIDAN BEFORE RICHMOND," "THE SCOUT," "THE GOLD-FIELD HEAD," ETC., ETC.

[We here give a synopsis of that part of this story which has appeared in previous numbers of the LEDGER for the benefit of those who have not read it from the beginning. Mark Heber, the hero, had come from Western New York to Kansas. Here he had lost his father and mother within one week, and his only companion was an adopted sister, Gairdelia, who was fourteen years old. Mark was eighteen years old, and they were destitute. They had formerly lived in Ohio, and Mark had been employed under the proprietor of an omnibus line named Whitman, who, with several other families, founded a settlement in Kansas, and built a stockade around their dwellings to keep off the Indians. Mark had left the settlement and entered as a general scout to do the scouting that had been brought, when an infant, to the house of Mark's father, by her mother, who was evidently a lady, but out of her mind. The family name of the child was unknown, and she was called by the name of Isabel. They talked of a man whom she dreaded, and who had murdered her son and who wanted to marry her and her infant daughter; she died when Guy was still young, and left her daughter to the protection of Mark's father, who brought her up. Isabel and Guy believed that he kept it and as she grew older, and heard her mother's and father's stories, Isabel's dislike would sometimes or other give her a touch of her parentage. She was a beautiful girl, and Mark was in love with her, although Isabel knew it not. The train was joined by a man in uniform, who gave his name as Colonel Jackson, of the United States Army, but who was in fact a noted robber and desperado named Frank Jackson, known as Red Knife, and who was described by Mark Heber, just as Mark had got Guy's jewel box out of her trunk, and a few minutes after the moment between Mark and the pretended Lieutenant Fallon, when Mark had left Isabel, and had gone to the corral to see to his horse, Guy came running into the house and dashed away, with the dragoons in pursuit. The emigrants then formed a train, which was made by the commander of the dragoons, that the supplies should be taken to the fort, and the train of 100 wagons left. Mark knew that the man he was her own father, who had murdered her little brother, and wanted to murder her mother and herself, for some nefarious purpose. It was this knowledge that made him so anxious to get out of the Indian village, where he was known as the David Chief, that made the little band of emigrants hasten to the stockade, as they felt certain that he would not hesitate to commit any crime to get possession of the child. Mark, on the morning after the conversation with Isabel, when a boy, who had been playing upon the platform inside the stockade, came running after the word, "Indians!" The man rushed out, seized his rifle, and mounted the platform, and looked over the platform, and could see a large force upon the plain. They looked, some three miles distant, a band of mounted Indians, riding toward the settlement at full speed. Whitman's field glass showed him that they were Indians, and that the appearance of soldiers with them showed that the still hostile interest was discovered a mistake later. Midway between the fort and the approaching savages, a man was coming upon horseback, flying for his life. Whitman knew that he was a white man by the dress, by his universal air, by his manner of standing. "Pursued by the red demons!" cried Whitman, "and no one coming on them! I need help too!" Was this white man was, and what his design was, are unfolded in the following chapters.]

CHAPTER XI.

ANOTHER DANGEROUS ACQUAINTANCE.

The appearance of the settlement immediately excited in behalf of the white fugitive, as, however great his fear, he no doubt was aware, every man in the fort and his horse seemed to need the new settlement.

In their excitement and anxiety for him, they forgot for a moment the peril that menaced the Indian and his pursuers.

The women and children gathered under the platform close to the stockade, and the men and boys above informed them of the fugitive's approach in the form of the savages.

Guy Heber climbed up to the platform at the first alarm, and, with a pale face, stood by the boy-hero.

"There are a dozen of the painted devils!" cried Whitman, looking through his field-glass. "They are Sioux, and their paint and feathers show them to be on the war-path. They are doing their best to overtake the white man. Ha! they will do it!"

A cry came up from the women and children below.

The fugitive's horse is tired and covered with foam, and is running with a weary gait.

It has been a long chase. The horse could not hold out—he staggers—as he comes!

Once more a cheer of joy went up from the safe. Knox and Halsey, go below and swing open the gates, that he may ride in in safety. We'll protect the gate with our rifles. Men, be ready! Fire at the word!

Knox and Halsey hastily descended to the ground and threw open the gate, standing to open on its short hinges.

The men on the platform above made ready to fire.

A few women peeped out at the open gate.

The fugitive was now within the fort. The Indians, evidently in awe of the formidable stockade, so suggesting the appearance of a fort behind the frowning black foot-holes, began to slacken their speed.

How! Is there twelve about attacking us," said Whitman. "There are but a dozen of the savages. Ha! the fugitive has escaped! but two men in the fort could have overpowered Indians in such numbers were under the influence of our rifles."

The colonel waved Mark's words. The Indians cease to an uneasy halt just out of rifle range from the fugitive, and then a few bullets toward the fugitive. The shots went wide of the mark, and the white man rode into the cover of the stockade, and approached the gate, which was locked behind him.

"Just give us the sign—a hint to keep off," said Whitman, "and I will fire a volley well upon."

A dozen rifles discharged their deadly rain through the portholes. The savages, apparently dismayed at this prompt reception, retreated a few yards further, and came again to a halt.

The white fugitive rode over the little drawbridge, and into the fort in safety.

The gates were hastily shut and barred.

"The red-skins mean to parley among themselves," said Whitman. "Hopkins and Arnold can keep a look-out and warn the rest of us of the enemy's movements. You may as well crack on to sleep by daylight, if they attack us at all."

Laying his rifle down upon the platform, he descended the ladder to the ground.

All except Hopkins and Arnold followed him. They found that the fugitive had dismounted, and had flung himself upon the ground, gasping for breath. The women were bringing water to him, binding his hands, and speaking to him words of kindness and sympathy.

Whitman pushed through the group, and looked down upon the rescued fugitive.

The latter encountered his glance, and arose with some difficulty to a sitting position.

He was a man in the prime of life, tall, vigorous and athletic, of the rude type of the western borderer. His garb was a mixture of savage and civilized costume. He wore a hunting shirt of dressed deer-skin, and a pair of fine flood wool trousers, fastened at the knees, and ornamented at the seam with ten pin, and a Mexican sombrero, which had, however, now fallen back upon the ground.

His face was overgrown with a bristling black beard. His forehead was low, his eyes small and furtive in their regards. His evident fatigue and the peril he had so narrowly escaped prevented any unfavorable comment upon his appearance in the minds of the settlers.

"You look tired out," said Whitman abruptly. "How long a chase did you give the red-skins?"

"About ten miles," said the escaped fugitive, still panting. "I was at the Loup Creek ten miles to the northward, and had stopped to water, when the savages came out upon the plain. I saw them at once, and knew I was pursued. I leaped into my saddle, and put spurs to my horse. I managed to keep ahead of them for the purpose of encountering an easier foe, but I little dreamed of finding a fort at the journey's end. I thought to find your party alone."

"What is your name?" asked Whitman.

"Pringle—Isaac Pringle, sir. I've got a

MR. PRINGLE A GUEST AT MR. WHITMAN'S RESIDENCE.

ranche on the Loup twenty miles to the northwest, and I am on my way to Fort McPherson to meet a wagon train in which I expect to find my brother. He is coming on from the States to join me."

Whitman stepped back and looked up at the platform.

"How about the savages, Arnold?" he demanded.

"They are dismounting," cried Arnold. "They are going to camp where they are, I think. They must intend to spend the night in sight of our fort."

"They do not mean to attack us in the night, then," said Whitman, grimly. "I am glad we have got old Sweiver. We'll mount him on the platform, and let him amuse them to the Sioux when the time comes. I'll warrant his talk will satisfy them."

"You seem well armed and well manned here," said the stranger, striving to look at and looking around him sharply.

"We are," said Whitman, tersely. "We have a service gun and fifteen rifles, and are all good shots, I reckon. We have taken possession of the region, and we mean to keep it. Fifty Indians could not make any impression upon our defenses."

"Yes, I see," said the stranger, "I wish my ranche was as well protected. You have come out here in the right way. Nothing like beginning right."

He moved forward, but staggered as with dizziness.

"Come to my house," said Whitman, suddenly. "My wife will give you a drop of brandy to set you up again."

Mr. Pringle followed his guide to his house, nearly the whole population following.

The log-house of Mr. Whitman was as neat and well-furnished as that of the best log-house of the Hebers, and was much larger. The roof projected a few feet all around, by which the family could sit during the warm weather, and be in the shade, and yet in the open air. From the door one entered directly into a roomy kitchen, with capacious hearth, a large cooking-stove, and all the other conveniences of a log-house, and a home-made lounge built.

The walls were covered with old newspapers pasted carefully on, and the pretty girls of the house had pasted on the paper pictures from illustrated papers.

Upon one side of the room were two doors, one leading into a bed-room, which was a large pantry, a sacking, and a staircase leading to the low loft where the boys were to sleep.

The other door opened into the parlor, and his sharp glance strayed into the interior, marking the accommodations and the position of every door.

The parlor house is very like mine, Mrs. Whitman," he said, as that lady brought out a cup of brandy and water to him, "and I thank you for your kindness, Madam. Mr. Whitman, I am glad to find you so well fixed. I hope that's my excuse—and allow me to thank you to show you our hospitality."

"Have you any children?" asked Mrs. Whitman, in a tone of interest.

"Yes, madam, a son and two," said Mr. Pringle flinchily. "It was on their account I came west. Couldn't make a living in the east."

The stranger drank his brandy nearly at one gulp, and seemed to feel a return of strength and vigor from it, although he still exhibited signs of fatigue.

The crowd that had followed Mr. Pringle to Whitman's door now separated, the men and some of the men returning toward the great gates and the sentinels, where parties of the Indians they were again anxious to hear.

Mrs. Whitman remained with the stranger guest.

The latter looked with a veiled and hidden scrutiny upon the group of women and children, and then upon the comfortable interior fare and home.

He rose to his feet, and walked to the door, making the most out of little, and fixing in a home for his own family. "I'll try the latitude, I said to myself. That girl is doing a good work than she knows for me. I'll take the whole village surrounded, and not an all to do it. Two Indians, and a boy, and a young lady Heber."

"Sons at all," said Whitman. "I'll show you the way."

He led on, walking slowly, out of consideration for the fatigue of his guest, and Pringle viewed the interior of the stockade with a glance of interest in the centre of the square where the block-house was to stand. The logs were lying about the square now.

"You will need a block-house with that stockade," said Pringle.

"Perhaps not, but we all go for making things snug," said Mr. Whitman. "The block-house will be built in the spring. The savages came, and they when we get a rational force of men, and Nebraska becomes a state, we'll have our town-hall where the block-house is now to be built. We are going to dig a well in the block-house, and keep our stores there."

Pringle commended the precaution, even while pronouncing it unnecessary.

Mr. Whitman finally took his guest upon the platform, and the two looked out upon the plain.

The Indians had escaped as a safe distance from the fort, and halted after a time, and then began to ride up and down.

"They can't get up my scalp so easily," said Pringle. "They wouldn't feel around this region if they knew the strength of the fort."

Mark Heber drew near.

"I don't think the Indians mean to attack us," said he. "Still, they may try it to-night. I have been thinking that I would ride out and reconnoiter them, and see if I could not frighten the whole Sioux nation from ever coming near us."

"This is Mark Heber, Mr. Pringle," said Whitman, with a smile. "He is always up to something about you, Mark," continued the settler, with a laugh. "He is a regular boy for sight, for scouting, and for your sister, and I took the liberty to show him the name of Isabel on it."

Mr. Pringle extended his hand to Mark in true western fashion. Mark yielded his own hand to the pressure, but withdrew it hastily, with a sense of repulsion he could not overcome nor analyze.

"I will go out with us, Mr. Pringle," he added, "and the train can cause to meet Fort McPherson. We will go in the morning at daybreak."

"You are on the exact route of wagon train," said Pringle, "and I may wait here. If my brother does not find me at McPherson, he will wait for me here. I am sure that he should think. I don't intend to run the risk of losing my brother, or being driven back from here to the fort. I can decide what I will do when I see how matters stand."

Mark looked upon the ground, and then upon the stranger, with a sense of repulsion he could not overcome.

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every waving bush. The wind affects one as it never does when it is only a matter of sight.

"I'll bet the Indians are moving," said Mark, looking sharply through the port-hole and turning to his companion with a face expressive of the utmost distress.

"I suspect as much before morning," replied Whitmore.

The listener moved away softly, and stole across the square, approaching Heber's cabin. He tried the door, but it was locked. He tried the windows of the kitchen; they were fast.

He went to Guy's window. It was partly down with a sail, and refused to yield to his touch.

Nothing daunted, he went around to the other window, and, with his knife, pressed back the bolt that fastened the sash, and raised it as he pushed it upward. The effort at once overbalanced that the sail was smaller than the similar bolt it occupied, and he seized the lower sash and worked it gently up and down for some minutes, thus working the sail loose.

In a short time, to his great satisfaction, the sail fell out of its socket, rattling upon the pantry floor.

The sound did not arouse the young mistress of the house. Pringle waited a little to assure himself of that fact, and then gently raised the sash. It was a tight fit, and he thought not to tempt an Indian to accept the aperture unasked, yet he managed to squeeze his person through and drop into the pantry.

He shut down the window and pulled off his boots. He presently found a person a small pocket lantern and lighted it, turning the slide so that the merest ray of light came from it.

Picking up his boots in one hand, he went out into the kitchen.

The fire had burned low, leaving only a few red embers on the hearth, and a faint glow from the lantern in the pantry. He could see everything in the kitchen with perfect distinctness.

He crossed the floor and softly entered Guy's room, hiding the light under his cap.

The girl was sleeping soundly. He drew forth his lantern and set it on the table that the window was uncurtained, and that the feeble gleam of the lantern might not be seen outside. He set down his boots at the door, and wept softly to the window and closed the hinged shutter.

Then he returned to the centre of the room, and stood irresolute.

It was clear that the bite was in the girl's trade, he mused. Here's his trunk, and here's his bed.

So far he had not stirred. He approached the trunk, and pulled off its chintz cover. It was the usual sea-faring trunk—square inside, which Burk had once tried to rob, but with ill success.

The intruder drew from his pocket a bunch of skeleton keys, and tried them in the trunk-lock. The bolt snapped back with a crisp click.

He started and looked toward the bed. Guy was sleeping as before.

He opened the lid to the trunk. It, indeed, was full of under garments, collars, ribbons, and the usual effects found in a young lady's wardrobe. He lifted these, and found under them the little walnut box which he had kept her for treasures left her by her mother since she could remember.

This box was locked, and the intruder had no key and could not force it open. He put it back, and closed the trunk, simply locking it, but Pringle's quick eye saw that it would, if carried in its present condition, fall open.

That's the very best the Cap'n described," he mused. "Walnut and rosewood, brass bands and a ball wide. He said it was not to open at. I wonder what's in it?

He rattled the box slightly. A metallic click came from it, as some article of the circumstantial all together against the inner side of the box.

"Jewelry by Jove!" the intruder exclaimed aloud. "What jewelry can a settler's girl own so far, barring a few trinkets that I took of it? I'spose he knows what he's about. I've obeyed orders, any how, and Miss Jack is outside waiting for the box. It must be heavy the time he's been out there with the box.

He looked at his big silver watch. The hands indicated five minutes before three.

"I'll be back in time for the next trip," he muttered, and set off to the window to the attack, and I'm to get off under cover of the noise and confusion. Cap'n Lem appears to!"

He put the box in an inner pocket of his coat, and opened the garment, and pinned it tight, his eyes involuntarily turning toward the bed.

He has utter consternation, Guy sat upright in bed, her white arms raised to her head.

She showed no astonishment or surprise.

"Oh, Mr. Pringle!" she cried, "Guy, her eyes gleaming with the strange light on the wilderness of her face. "What are you doing in our home in my absence? Where is father? Is Mark?"

Pringle recovered himself by a strong effort.

Your brother is out on the wall. Miss Heber," he said, and he was glad to see that the house, I wanted something out of your trunk, and had got it, and was going out to call Mark and you dead, though I've had no chance to do it yet."

"Indeed?" echoed Guy. "Where were you here then? Your flight from the Indians was all a sham? You are in league with them? You are sent here by Blue Jack?"

"You've got a keen head, Miss," said Pringle admiringly. "You've about guessed the situation. Have you got your head back on your pillow, and don't say a word. If you raise your voice I'll put one hand on you."

He meant what he said, and his grim face showed it.

Guy had not understood the night. Her resolve was in her pocket, where she stealthily opened it, by Mark's order, and she had it steadily toward it.

"You'll never get it," said the ruffian warningly. "I've heard about that pistol of yours. Better not show it. Girls' pistols are apt to be still bad an hour, and I'll leave you."

Guy was at the point of firing at the possible when she heard a tapping at the house door. Mark's voice called in low tones at the window sash.

That voice naturally distracted Pringle's attention.

With a bound like that of a leopardess, Guy sprang from her bed and darted to the room door, entering a shriek that was fairly appalling. She pulled the house door, and drew back the bolt.

Mark leaped into the room, his eyes blazing, and Pringle sprang madly toward him, from the inner room.

And yet in that same moment an awful thought arose on the night air outside the stockade, the war whoops of the Sioux, as they attacked the fort!

(To be continued.)

Genius, Talent, Cleverness.

Genius rushes like a whirlwind. Talent marches like a cavalcade. Cleverness skims like a swallow in a summer evening. It is sharp, decisive and a sudden turning. The man of genius dwells with men as a superior nature. By man of talent, in his study; but the clever fellow dances here, there, and everywhere, and is evidently in a hurricane, striking everything with astonishment. Genius is slow to be attacked by envy, because its talents will attack; therefore, the clever man assails the individual and slanders private character, but the man of genius despises both; he bends from the same mass, he lives in himself shrouded in the consciousness of his own strength; he interferes with none, and waits forth on example that "eagles fly alone;" they are the birds that soar above the storm that shoulder a passage where none has path, he was lined in under force, should a cannon ball at him, he may disarm it; but he will not, cannot, attack the privacy of another. Clever men write verses, men of talent write prose, but the man of genius writes poetry.

THE FAG-END OF A CRUISE.

BY E. W. NEWMAN.

"There's a boat under your lee, sir, wants to come on board, I think," said the first officer, coming down the quarter-deck one day, preparing his head into the cabin, where we were sitting after dinner, cracking nuts, sipping nuts and sipping brandy and water.

"I'll be on deck in a minute, Mr. Locke," answered Captain Lee. And we all hurried on, of course, and went on deck also.

It was a cold, drizzling rain storm, with a thick fog hanging over it. It was about 8 o'clock, and the passengers retired to the cabin to smoke before going to bed, and the watch were sent below.

I was a raw fellow, and went on deck to see the gale. It was my first, and I liked it. There was something very attractive to me in the wild, destructive scene before me. By this time the fog had cleared away, and the wind blew the masses of black clouds that flashed with lightning, and the sea was white with the fury rode to their stormiest anchors, the crests and foam covering their decks, the lightning momentarily revealing them gloriously visible, their crews gathered round the mainmast, or stood on the main deck.

Occasionally, too, a vessel would drag, and then there was bustle. The night was getting far more glorious, but there was nothing the sense of danger to make it so. I was in my element with the Maker! It was right before being with the Maker! It was right before being with the Maker! It was right before being

A WONDERFUL MICROSCOPE.

BY GEORGE W. BUNGAY.

A curious cynic, who lives on the slope
Of a hill, to others devotes his labors;
For he has a wonderful microscope,
Through which he can see the faults of his neighbors.

Their dress and address, their social affairs,
Their taxes, their income, their dues and expenses,
Their cupboards below, and their closets up stairs,
Are brought to a focus, right under his lenses.

And when a visitor calls, day or night,
Be he teacher, or doctor, or minister,
If he come within range of his sight,
He discovers his motives are sinister.

For he looks further and deeper than men's
Common eyes can see, unaided with glasses.
With his wonderful, curious, cynical lens,
He looks at the motive of man as it passes.

When a good deed has been done for the poor,
Up to his envious eyes go the lenses,
And he looks from his roof, or his window, or door,
For something that's dark hid away in the fences.

When a man wins renown, for his genius or heart,
Displayed in the "sanctum," or Congress, or college,
He declares he has something for sale in the mart,
And owes to another his over-praised knowledge.

Should his skill and his industry happen to win
A competent fortune and social position,
His microscope shows there is something within
Which ought there and then to reverse his condition.

The curious cynic who lives on the slope,
Whose words are sharp as the blades of sabres,
Makes of his own vision the microscope
Through which he can see no good in his neighbors.

A DARING GAME;

OR,

Neva's Three Lovers.

By MRS. HARRIET LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE HAMPTON MYSTERY," "THE BAILIFF'S SCHEME," "THE LADY OF KILDARE," "THE OLD LIFE'S SHADOWS," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.

LALLY IN HER NEW SITUATION.

Lally returned to Canterbury in the cab that had brought her out to Sandy Lands, Mrs. Blight's pert little villa in the suburbs, and entered upon the task of procuring a neat, although necessarily scanty wardrobe. She bought a cheap box, which she had sent to her lodgings. A lady's furnishing house yielded her a change of under garments, another print dress, and a gown of black alpaca, and a supply of collars and cuffs; her entire purchases amounting to three pounds ten shillings. She carried her effects to her attic lodging, the rent of which had been paid in advance, packed her box, and set out again in the cab for Sandy Lands.

It was noon when the vehicle stopped again before the little villa. The cabman rang the garden bell as before, and when the house-maid appeared he dumped down Lally's box upon the gravelled walk, received his pay, and departed. The smart house-maid was as contemptuous as before of Lally's humble garments, but spoke to her familiarly, as if the two were upon a social level, and conducted her toward the rear porch, saying:

"Missus said you was to be shown up to your room, Miss, to make your twilet before seeing the children. If you please," added the girl, with increasing familiarity, "you and I are to see a good deal of each other, and so I want to know what to call you."

Whatever the social rank of Lally's parents, Lally herself was a lady by instinct and education. The house-maid's easy patronage was offensive to her. She answered quietly:

"You may call me Miss Bird."

"Oh," said the house-maid, with a sniff and a toss of her head. "That's the talk, is it? Well, then, Miss Bird, follow me up to your room. This way, Miss Bird. Up these stairs, Miss Bird."

Lally followed her guide up the stairs to the third and topmost story, and to a rear room.

"This is the room of the nussery governess," said the offended house-maid, her nose in the air. "The room on your right is the school-room, Miss Bird. That on the left is the nussery. You are to have your room to yourself, Miss Bird, which I hopes will suit you. There's no petting of governesses in this here 'stablishment. You rises at seven, Miss Bird, and eats with the children. You begins lessons at nine o'clock, Miss Bird, and keeps 'em up till luncheon, and then comes music, langwidges, and them sort. Dinner in the school-room, Miss Bird, at five o'clock. Your evenings you has to yourself."

"I shall receive my list of duties from Mrs. Blight," said Lally pleasantly, "but I am obliged to you all the same."

The house-maid's face softened under Lally's gentleness and sweetness.

"I wouldn't wonder if she was a born lady, after all," the girl thought. "She won't stand putting down, and her face is that sorrowful I pity her."

But she did not give expression to these thoughts. What she did say was this:

"My name's Loizy, and if I can do anything for you just let me know. There's my bell, and I must go. When you get ready, come down stairs to Missus's boodoor."

She vanished just as the house boy, or Buttons, as he was called, appeared with Lally's box. He set this down near the door, and also departed. Left alone, Lally examined her new home with a faint thrill of interest.

The floor was bare, with the exception of a strip of loose and threadbare carpet before the low brass bedstead. There was a chintz-covered couch, a chintz-covered easy-chair, a chest of drawers, and a green-shuttered blind at the single window. The room had a dreary aspect, but to Lally it was a haven of refuge. She locked her door and knelt down and prayed, thanking God that He had been so good to her as to give her a safe shelter and a home. Then, rising, she dressed herself as quickly as possible, putting on her black alpaca dress, a spotless linen collar and cuffs, a black sash, and a black ribbon in her hair. Thus attired, she descended the stairs, finding the way to the boudoir, at the door of which she knocked.

Mrs. Blight's languid voice bade her enter.

She obeyed, finding her employer still reclining in an armed chair, looking as if she had not moved since Lally's previous visit. She had a book in one hand, a paper cutter in the other. She recognized Lally with a sort of pleased surprise.

"Ah, back again, and punctual!" she exclaimed, glancing at a toy clock in white and blue enamel on the low mantel-piece. "I had a great many misgivings after you went away, Miss Bird. Five pounds is a good deal of money to one in your position in life, and the world is so full of swindlers. I have already written to the ladies to whom you referred me. I suppose I should have waited for their answer before engaging you, but I am such an impulsive creature, I always do just as I feel at the spur of the moment. My husband calls me 'a child of impulse,' and the words describe me exactly. I'm glad to see you back. I don't know, I'm sure, what I should have said to Mr. Blight if you had decamped, for he does not appreciate my ability to read faces. The time I got taken in with my last cook—the one we found lying with her head in a brass kettle, and the kitchen fire gone out, at the very hour when I had a large company assembled to dine with me—Charles said, 'Fudge, don't let us hear any more about physiognomy.' You see, I engaged the woman because her face was all that could be desired. And since that time Charles won't hear a word about physiognomy."

Lally sat down, obeying a wave of Mrs. Blight's hand. That "child of impulse," silly, garrulous, and puffed up with self-importance and vulgarity, pursued her theme until she had exhausted it.

"You are looking very well, Miss Bird," she said, changing the subject, "but all in black—why, you are quite a black-bird, I declare," and she laughed at her own wit. "Are you in mourning? Have you lately lost a friend?"

"Yes, madam," replied Lally sorrowfully, "I have lately lost the only friend I had in the whole world."

"Oh, indeed. That is sad; but I do hope you won't wear a long face and go moping about the house, frightening the children," said Mrs. Blight, with a candor that was less charming than oppressive to her newly engaged governess. "You must do as the poet so romantically says:

"'Wear a smile,
Though the cold heart runs darkly to ruin the while.'

If he doesn't say just that, it's some such thing, and a very pretty sentiment too. And now let us discuss your new duties."

She proceeded to sketch Lally's duties, much as the house-maid had done. Then she gave a history of each one of the five children who were to be under Lally's supervision. Three of the children were boys, and their fond mother described them as paragons. Her girls also were extraordinary in their mental and physical attractions, "having once been taken, at the Zoological gardens, during a visit to London, by a strange gentleman, for the children of a nobleman!"

"I will accompany you to the nursery, Miss Bird," said the lady, arising. "I desire to introduce you to my darlings. I have great faith in the instincts of children, and I want to see what my children think of you."

Accordingly Mrs. Blight conducted Lally again to the upper floor and to the nursery, which was at the moment of their entrance in a state of wildest confusion and disorder.

The nurse, a stout old woman, and the nurse-maid, a red-faced young girl, were in a state of despair, and frantically holding their hands to their ears, while five robust, boisterous, frouzy-headed children rode about the room upon chairs, played "tag," and otherwise disported themselves.

The entrance of Mrs. Blight and Lally caused a cessation of the noise. The mother called her children to her, but they retreated with their fingers in their mouths, looking askance at their new governess. The three "noble boys" presently set up a loud bellowing, and the two girls who had been "mistaken by a strange gentleman for the children of a nobleman," hid behind their nurses.

It required all the persuasions, coupled with threats, of Mrs. Blight, to induce her shy children to show themselves to Lally. It appeared that they had a horror of governesses, regarding them as tyrants and ogresses created especially to destroy the happiness of children; but Lally's smiles, added to the fact that she looked but little more than a child, finally induced them to be sociable and to approach her.

"In a day or two you won't be able to do anything with them, Miss," said the head nurse. "They'll ride rough-shod over you."

"They are so spirited," murmured Mrs. Blight. "Study their characters closely, Miss Bird, and be very tender with them. I have one child more than the Queen, and my children are named for the royal family. These three boys are Leopold, Albert Victor, and George. The girls are named Victoria and Alberta. My elder children are at school. Children, this is Miss Bird, your new governess. Now come with her into the school-room. Lessons begin immediately."

The little flock, with Lally at their head, was conducted to the school-room, a large, bare apartment, furnished with two benches, a teacher's chair and desk, and a black-board. Here Mrs. Blight left them, convinced that she had fulfilled her duties as parent and employer, and returned to her book.

Lally proceeded to examine into the acquirements of her pupils, finding them lamentably ignorant. Lessons were given out, but there was no disposition on the part of her pupils to study. They threw paper balls at each other, whispered and giggled, and altogether proved at the very outset a sore trial to their young teacher. Their shyness lasted for but a brief period, and then, having no longer fear of the sad-faced governess, began to romp about the room, to shout, and to engage in a general game of frolics.

Lally had a vein of decision in her character, and with the exercise of a gentle firmness induced her pupils to return to their seats. She explained their lessons to them with an unfailing patience, but the hours of that September afternoon seemed almost endless to her. The children were froward, disobedient, and idle. They had been spoiled by their mother, and were full of mischievous tricks, so that Lally's soul wearied within her.

Dinner, a very plain and frugal one, was served to the governess and the children in the school-room at five o'clock. After dinner, Lally's time belonged to herself, and she put on her hat and went out for a walk, having a longing for the fresh air.

This first day at Sandy Lands was a fair type of the days that followed. The children, under Lally's firm but gentle rule, became more quiet and studious, and conceived an affection for their young governess. Mrs. Blight was delighted with their improvement. She had received a reply from Lally's former employers, giving the young girl very high praise, and was consequently well pleased with herself for securing such valuable services as Lally's at a salary less than half she had ever before paid to a governess.

Mr. Blight was a lawyer in good practice at Canterbury, and spent his days at his office, returning to Sandy Lands to dine, and leaving home immediately after breakfast. He was a small, ferret-eyed man, always in a hurry, a mere money making machine, with a great ambition to make or acquire a fortune. At present he lived fully up to his income, a fact which gave both him and Mrs. Blight much secret anxiety. With ten children to educate and provide for, several servants to pay, a carriage and pair for Mrs. Blight, and the lawyer's wines, cigars, frequent elaborate dinners to his friends, and other items by no means small to settle, Mr. Blight was continually harassed by debt, and yet had not sufficient strength of will to reduce his expenses and live within his income.

One cause, perhaps, of their indiscreet self-indulgence was that they had "expectations."

There was an old lady connected with the family, the widow of a wealthy London banker who had been Mr. Blight's uncle. This old lady was supposed to have no relatives of her own to enrich at her death, and the Blights had lively hopes of inheriting her fifty thousand pounds, which had descended to her absolutely at her husband's death, and of which she was free to dispose as she might choose.

This lady lived in London, at the West End, was very eccentric, very irascible, and went little in society, being quite aged and infirm. She was in the habit of coming down to Sandy Lands annually in September, ostensibly to spend a month with her late husband's relatives; but she always returned home within a week, alleging that she could not bear the noise of the Blight children, and that a month under the same roof with them would deprive her of life or reason. It was now about the time of this lady's annual visit, and one morning, when Lally had been about two weeks at Sandy Lands, Mrs. Blight came up to the school-room, an open letter in her hand, and dismissing the children to the nursery for a few minutes, said confidentially:

"Miss Bird, I have just received a letter from the widow of my husband's uncle, a remarkable old lady, with fifty thousand pounds at her own absolute disposal. My husband is naturally the old lady's heir, being her late husband's nephew, and we expect to inherit her property. Her name is Mrs. Wroat."

"An odd name!" murmured Lally.

"And she's as odd as her name," declared Mrs. Blight. "She comes here at this time every year, and always brings a parrot, a lap-dog, a bandbox in a green muslin case, a blue umbrella, and a snuffy old maid, who eyes us all as if we had designs on her mistress's life. The absurd old creature is devoted to her mistress, who is a mere bundle of whims and eccentricities. The old lady calls for a cup of coffee at midnight, and she hates our dear children, and she thrashed Leopold with her cane last year, because he put nettles in her bed and flour on her best cap, the poor dear innocent child! And I never dared to interfere to save Leopold, though his screams rang through the house, and I stood outside her door listening and peeping, for you know we must have her fifty thousand pounds, even if she takes the lives of all my darlings!" and Mrs. Blight's tone was pathetic. "She's a nasty old beast—there! Of course I say it in confidence, Miss Bird. It would be all up with us, if Aunt Wroat were to hear that I said that. She's very tenacious of respect, and all that bother, and insisted I should punish Albert Victor because he called her 'an old curmudgeon.'"

"When do you expect this lady?" asked Lally.

"To-morrow, with her maid, lapdog, parrot, umbrella and bandbox. She writes that she will stay a month, and that she must have no annoyance from the children, and that she won't have them in her room—the old nuisance! If it wasn't for her money, I'd telegraph her to go to Guinea, but as we are situated I can't. I must put up with her ways. And what I want of you, Miss Bird, is to see that the children do not stir off this floor while she is here. Let them die for want of exercise, the poor darlings, rather than we offend this horrid old woman. If we sacrifice ourselves, she can't leave her property to some fusty old charity, that's one comfort."

"I will do my best to keep the children out of Mrs. Wroat's sight," said Lally gravely.

"You must succeed in doing so, for the old lady says this will probably be her last visit to us, as she is growing more and more infirm, and she hints that it is time to make her will. Everything depends upon her reception on the occasion of this visit. Let her get miffed at us, and it's all up. I declare I wish I had a place where I could hive the children during her stay. She must not see or hear them, Miss Bird."

"Is there anything more that I can do, Mrs. Blight?"

"Yes; she always has the governess play upon the piano and sing to her in the evening. She is fond of music, desperately so. We always hire a cottage piano and put it in her sitting-room while she stays, and the governess plays to her there evenings. She's very liberal with a governess who can play well. She gave Miss Oddly last year a five-pound note. And always when she leaves us after a visit, she hands me twenty pounds and says she never wants to be indebted to anybody, and that's to defray her expenses while here. I have to take it. I wouldn't dare to refuse it."

"I shall be glad to amuse her in any way, Mrs. Blight," declared the young governess. "I shall not mind her eccentricities, and shall remember that she is 'aged and infirm.'"

"And that she has fifty thousand pounds which we must have," said Mrs. Blight. "Don't fail to remember that!"

Much relieved at having guarded against a meeting between her expected guest and her children, Mrs. Blight departed to seek an interview with her cook.

Extensive preparations were made that day for the reception of Mrs. Wroat. Two rooms were prepared for her use, one of them having two beds, one bed being for the use of the maid. A cottage piano was hired and put into one of the rooms. The choicest articles of furniture in the house were arranged for her use. The hint that Mrs. Wroat was thinking of making her will was sufficient to render her time-serving, money-hunting relatives gentle, pliable, and apparently full of tender anxiety for her happiness and comfort.

Mr. Blight was informed of the good news when he came home to dinner, and he sought a personal interview with his children's governess, entreating her to keep the youngsters out of sight during the visit of Mrs. Wroat, as she valued her situation.

Everything being thus arranged, it only remained for the guest to arrive.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NEVA'S ANSWER TO LORD TOWYN.

Mr. and Mrs. Craven Black, summoning the indispensable Mrs. Artress to a private conference, passed some hours in their own room in anxious deliberation upon their future course in regard to Neva. It was necessary to the full success of the daring game they were playing, that Neva should marry Rufus Black; but she had rejected him, completely and finally, in obedience to her instincts of duty to God and to herself, and her enemies began to believe that they would have serious trouble in forcing her into the marriage. But they did not falter in their evil determination, and the three plotted and planned until their united villainy had formed a scheme which promised them success.

In accordance with the conclusion to which they finally arrived, Mrs. Artress went away from Hawkhurst that very afternoon in the family brougham, and two trunks belonging to her were conveyed to Canterbury in a spring wagon. It was given out that she was going to London to visit a friend, with whom she would remain until after the return of Mr. and Mrs. Craven Black from Wynde Heights. She really went up to London, but to what point she then directed her wanderings no one knew, and very probably few cared.

Rufus Black wandered disconsolately all day in the park, and came in an hour before dinner, hungry and tired, and with a sullen and hopeless countenance. His father encountered him in the upper hall, and went into his room with him.

"That's a fine face, Rufus," said Craven Black sneeringly, "to win the heart of a girl like Miss Wynde. You look as if you were travelling straight to the dogs."

"So I am, sir," said Rufus recklessly.

"You dare to answer me in that manner!"

"To whom should I tell the truth, if not to you?" cried Rufus desperately. "You have made me what I am. I married a pure and innocent young girl, who but for me was utterly friendless in the wide world. You tore me from her. You persuaded me that my marriage was illegal—"

"And wasn't it?"

"I suppose it was, but it was not null and void. It could have been set aside by due process of law, because I was a minor, and because I perjured myself in declaring that I was of age; but I refuse to believe that it was null and void, no marriage at all. I never wronged my poor Lally as you pretend."

"Why this spasm of virtue?" demanded Craven Black, with a cynical smile. "The girl's dead, isn't she?"

"Yes, she's dead! God help me!"

"What a tragic groan! This morning you were in despair because Miss Wynde rejected you. To-night you are mourning after your corn-chandler's daughter. I'd like to understand you—I would indeed. Which are you wailing after, Miss Wynde or Lalla Rookh?"

"Which?" cried Rufus, with wild eyes. "For the girl you and I murdered! It is she whom I mourn! I think of her stark form and open eyes and dead bruised face, as she must have looked when they brought her up out of the river, and my heart is like to break within me. She haunts me day and night. In my bed I waken from my dreams to clasp her closer to me, but my arms close on the empty air. I seem to feel the touch of her hands on my face—oh, Heavens! I shall never feel them there again! I was a poor pitiful coward. Yet what could I do? And yet you and I are Lally's murderers!"

Craven Black shivered involuntarily.

"You act as if you had a touch of the D. T.," he said. "Have you been spending the day in a Canterbury pot-house?"

"No; I have been wandering in the park, trying to forget. You need not fear that I shall get drunk again."

"Your reflections were rather singular for a rejected lover of Miss Wynde," sneered Craven Black. "I thought you loved the heiress?"

"So I do, but not as I loved Lally. If Miss Wynde does not take pity on me, I am lost. The love of a good woman would save me from madness and utter despair. In time I might grow to love her as I loved Lally, and in any case I would worship her from very gratitude."

"I am blessed if I can understand you," said Craven Black, his lips curling. "You love a dead woman and a living woman, and mourn one while you want to marry the other. It is very curious. It's a pity you are not a Mahommedan, so that you could have had both."

"Stop!" cried Rufus, in a tone of command. "Don't speak such words in connection with the names of Lally and Miss Wynde. I want to marry Neva to save myself from going mad—"

"After another woman? Exactly. No wonder Miss Wynde declined the honor, with thanks."

"I shall leave here to-morrow," said Rufus.

"You won't do any such thing. You will stay at Hawkhurst for the remainder of the week, and play the lover to Miss Wynde, and sigh like any donkey in her ears, and spout poetry, and touch her heart. 'Faint heart never won fair lady,' says the proverb. Girls often refuse a man the first time he offers, for fear of being held too cheap. Pursue the girl gently, but keep pursuing."

"She says her father wrote her a letter saying he knew me," said Rufus doggedly. "She asked me about him, and I told her I didn't know Sir Harold from a butcher."

"You did?" gasped Craven Black. "The devil!"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, you have put your foot in it. I knew you were a fool, but I didn't suppose you had arrived at such a low state of idiocy as it appears you have. Didn't I tell you what to tell the girl if she ever spoke of her father?"

"I believe you did, but I couldn't stand there with her eyes on me and deliberately lie to her. I understood about the letter. *You wrote it.*"

"Hush! I've a good mind to leave you to yourself, and let you fetch up in some union," declared Craven Black angrily. "Such a dolt as you are isn't fit to live. How do you expect the girl to marry you when you yourself put obstacles in the way?"

"See here," said Rufus. "What are you going to make out of my marriage with Neva Wynde?"

"Ten thousand pounds a year, which you are to formally agree to pay me out of her income."

"I thought you had some motive in the matter besides love to me. But I'd pay it if she'd marry me. But she won't."

"She will, if you choose to be a little bolder. We leave here, my wife, Neva and myself, next Monday for Wynde Heights. Mrs. Black will use all her influence with Neva during our absence to induce her to accept you, and I am sure she will succeed. You are to hold yourself in readiness to come to us at any moment on receiving my summons."

"Where is Wynde Heights?"

"In Yorkshire."

"Very well. I will come when you notify me. But I don't think going will do any good. Miss Wynde is no coquette, and not likely to change her mind. Besides, she is likely to marry Lord Towyn."

"I think not," said Craven Black significantly. "*She is a minor, and I don't believe she would marry against the wishes of her step-mother?*"

"*The question is if your wife is her step-mother,*" remarked Rufus, still recklessly. "*The probability is that the relationship is* worn out by this time, and the sense of duty that Miss Wynde may have felt toward her father's widow will fall short when it comes to be directed toward Craven Black's wife."

"We won't go into details," said his father coolly. "If you want to marry the girl, keep telling her so. There's nothing like persistence."

"Ye-s; but about that ten thousand pounds a year?" said Rufus thoughtfully. "I don't think it would be right to take any such sum out of her income, and besides, it might be impossible."

"Leave that to me. As to the right and wrong of it, a perjurer is not qualified to judge. Confine yourself to what you can understand. It is time to get ready for dinner, and I advise you to come down with a cheerful face."

With this advice, Craven Black went away to his own rooms.

Rufus resolved to act upon his father's advice, and when he went down to dinner with a pale, melancholy face, and haggard eyes, he wore an air of assumed cheerfulness which touched Neva's heart.

That evening he sang with her while she played upon the piano. He quoted poetry to her in the third drawing-room, where they were alone, and afterward induced her to walk with him in the moonlight upon the terrace.

The next day he was full of delicate attentions to Miss Wynde. She found a bouquet of wood violets at her plate at breakfast, with the dew still upon them, and knew who had procured them for her. He asked to be allowed to accompany her on her morning ride, and Neva assented. After the ride, they played chess, gathered bouquets in the conservatory, and, later, walked in the park. Neva was gently courteous to him all the while, but there was a quiet reserve in her manner that forbade him to speak again of love or marriage to her.

The day after, Lord Towyn called at Hawkhurst, and Mr. and Mrs. Craven Black received him with all courtesy, and were so politely attentive to him that he could not exchange a word with Neva unheard by them.

The young Earl went away, as may be supposed, troubled and annoyed.

On Friday he rode over again from his marine villa, and was similarly entertained, and again could not see Neva alone.

On Saturday he came to Hawkhurst in the early morning, and learned at the lodge gate that Miss Wynde, attended by her groom, was gone for a ride, and that she had gone by the Dingle Farm. His heart bounded within him, and he spurred away in eager pursuit.

He traversed the wood and crossed the wide common, and skirted the dangerous chalk pit, and rode up to the old farm gate just as Neva, remounting her horse, came riding out on her return.

The young Earl's warm blue eyes flashed a tender radiance upon her, and he raised his hat, his golden hair gleaming in the sunshine, while his noble face glowed with a laughing delight. An answering radiance flashed from Neva's red-brown orbs, and she blushed as she bade him a careless good-morning.

"I came out to meet you," said Lord Towyn, as he wheeled his horse and rode at her side. "I have much to say to you."

He glanced over his shoulder, but the discreet groom was hanging back, and with a mental blessing upon the fellow, Lord Towyn saw that the field was clear, and that the time had arrived in which to learn his fate.

They rode on for a little while in silence, until they were past the chalk pit and out upon the breezy common. The groom was out of earshot, and the young Earl said gently:

"Neva, I have been twice to Hawkhurst to receive the answer you promised me, but I could not speak to you alone. I may not find another opportunity than this, as you go with the Blacks to Wynde Heights on Monday. And so, although this does not seem a fitting place, I ask you again if you will be my wife? I love you, Neva, with all my heart and soul. If you will trust your happiness to me, you will find in me a true lover to the end of our days. Do you think you could be happy with me?"

Neva's pure proud face flushed hotly, and she bent her head low toward her saddle-bow. Lord Towyn waited for her answer in an almost breathless suspense, but she did not speak until they were in the wood path and out of sight of even the lagging groom.

Then she lifted her head shyly, and turned upon her lover a face as divinely fair and roseate as a June morning, and although she spoke no word he read assent in the drooping eyes, the reddening cheeks, and the proud, tremulous mouth.

He pressed toward her in rapture, and seized one little gauntleted hand, pressing it in his own.

"It is Yes, Neva?" he whispered, as if fearing the very birds might hear him. "Oh, my darling, how shall I deserve this great joy?"

He raised her hand to his lips, and the contact thrilled his very soul. He looked back. No one was in sight. He stooped in his saddle and bent toward her, and his kiss, warm, tender and passionate, fell upon her scarlet mouth, and thus they were betrothed.

The next instant he was again erect in his saddle, and the ecstasy of his glowing face and the unrepressed rapture of his manner, and the tender caressing in his very gaze proclaimed his great and solemn joy.

"I have a ring, it was my mother's, Neva, and I ask you to wear it as a sign of our engagement to each other," he said. "When I see my mother's ring on your finger, I shall feel that you are indeed mine."

He took from his little finger a gold ring set with a single brilliant of great size and splendor. Neva tremblingly removed her gauntlet, and the young Earl placed the ring upon that finger which custom has dedicated to the purpose.

"That is the seal of our betrothal," he whispered.

Neva slowly put on her glove.

"Arthur," she said suddenly, "do you think papa would have approved my marriage with you?"

"I know he would, my darling. It was his wish, as it was my father's, that we should marry."

"If I could only think that he never changed his mind!" sighed the young girl. "I have a letter he wrote me the night before he perished in India, Arthur, and in this letter he says that he desires me to marry Rufus Black."

The young Earl looked surprised, incredulous.

"I have the letter with me," said Neva. "You can read it. In it papa says he desires me to marry this young man, whom he esteems and loves. I have struggled to obey papa's last wishes, but I cannot—I cannot! And he was such a good father, Arthur, that I reproach myself continually for my disobedience. I never disobeyed him before, and I seem to see his eyes full of reproach fixed upon me, and to hear his voice— Oh, Arthur! Arthur!"

"Let me see the letter, darling."

Neva extricated it from the folds of her dress, and gave it to him. They halted while he read it. A look of surprise, wonder and incredulity mantled Lord Towyn's face as he read. It was followed by a sternness that well became his fair and haughty face.

"I pronounce the letter a forgery!" he declared. "May I keep it, Neva, for the present? I desire to show it to Mr. Atkins, who shall give us his opinion on the handwriting."

"Yes; keep it," assented Neva.

Lord Towyn carefully put it in his pocket.

"I pronounce the letter a forgery," he repeated sternly. "How did it come to you, darling?"

"*Lady Wynde gave it to me on my return from France. Papa desired her to retain it for a year. Who would forge such a letter, Arthur?*"

"I don't know. *I am puzzled. One cannot suspect Lady Wynde, and yet—and yet— I don't know what to think, Neva. I don't believe Sir Harold ever saw Rufus Black.*"

"Rufus says he never saw papa, or that he never spoke to him," said Neva. "And that remark made me doubt the letter. But Rufus never forged it, Arthur. Rufus is a kind-hearted, but weak-willed boy—he is no more. If he had more 'backbone' in his character, he would be even noble. I like him, Arthur, and I know he never wrote that letter. Lady Wynde did not. She is too good for that. It might have been written by Craven Black. I do not like him, and think him quite capable of the forgery, only so many of the words are papa's own that it seems wicked to doubt its authenticity."

"I will prove it a forgery!" cried the young Earl. "Sir Harold was incapable of binding your fate in this manner to a man you never saw before it was written. There is some foul conspiracy against you, Neva, but we have outwitted your enemies. I am impatient to have you under my own guardianship. The possibility that you have enemies makes me afraid to trust you from me. Give up this visit to Wynde Heights, darling."

"It is too late, Arthur. We shall stay there but a fortnight, and I have promised to go. Papa bade me love his wife and obey her, and though she no longer bears his name, and I no longer owe her obedience, yet I have given my word to go up to Yorkshire with her, and must keep my promise."

"But when you return, Neva, you will marry me? Do not condemn me to a long probation. Let us be married quietly some morning at the Wyndham church, after due intimation to our friends. Shall it not be so?"

Neva yielded a shy assent.

"We will be married a month hence, Neva?" whispered the ardent young lover.

"Two months," said Neva, smiling. "I must not be too lightly won, Lord Towyn. And, besides, I must have the orthodox trousseau. I will tell Mrs. Black of our engagement when I am with her at Wynde Heights. Rufus is not going with us, nor is Artress."

They had threaded the wood and come out upon the highway long since while they were talking, and were now within sight of Hawkhurst. Rufus Black was riding out of the great gates, on his way to meet Neva. The tête-à-tête of the young pair was over for the morning, and recognizing the fact, and not wishing to proclaim his happy secret to his defeated rival, Lord Towyn made his adieus to Neva, begging her to write him daily from Yorkshire, which she promised to do, and then, raising his hat to Rufus Black, the young Earl spurred his horse and rode swiftly on toward Wyndham.

Neva returned home with Rufus.

On Monday morning, Mr. and Mrs. Craven Black, accompanied by Miss Wynde, departed for Wynde Heights.

On Wednesday, Lord Towyn looked for a letter from his young betrothed. None came. Thursday, Friday and Saturday went by, and still there came no letter from Neva, announcing her safe arrival in Yorkshire.

The young Earl wrote every day, his uneasiness increasing as the time passed. He communicated his alarm to Sir John Freise and Mr. Atkins, and they telegraphed to the clergyman of the little town in whose vicinity Wynde Heights was situated, begging him to call and see if Miss Wynde was in good health.

The answer to this dispatch came promptly, and also by telegraph. It was to this effect:

"Sir John Freise and Mr. Atkins: Wynde Heights is untenanted, save by the housekeeper. Miss Wynde has not been here, nor have Mr. and Mrs. Black."

On receipt of this astounding message, the young Earl posted up to town, as did Sir John Freise and Mr. Atkins. They searched for the missing heiress and her guardians, but their search was futile. Not a trace of her could be found. She had come up to London with her enemies, but no further clue to her could be found. She had completely disappeared, and her fate was shrouded in dark and horrible mystery!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

DISPUTES.—It is an excellent rule to be observed in all disputes, that men should give soft words and hard arguments; that they should not so much strive to vex, as to convince an opponent.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

THE MOURNER'S CRY.

BY ETHEL LYNN.

Stay, O angel, homeward turning,
Toward the stars now lit and burning,
Sadness this ceaseless yearning.

Stay to see Him!
Shall I see Him? Shall I see Him?
Positives find each new sadness!
While the glass of Faith forever
Wanes it dim.

Through the dew-drop in the flower,
Through the clouds that hide the morning, lower,
God I see, his love and power,
Yet I see Him!
Yet I see the Master dearer,
His wise, loving, gracious answer,
Manhood sure.

Through the veil of Judah's glory
Christ's vision of the story,
Through the tears of human grief—
Through cathedral window painted
Gentile legends of the sainted
Who have died.

Can the high-priest jewels lighten,
Can the Urim and Thummim
Diamonds with their splendor whiten?
Join in the resulte eternal?
Over far Jerusalem weeping?
On the cross Thy pierced feet keeping?—
Ever calling, Him?

Thus the sweet, bitter raving
From the jungle new lit and burning,
Satisfied my ceaseless yearning.

Not the pain I would have sought it;
Not the loss I willed her brought it;
Not the way I should have wrought it—
No! Ah, no!

By some hints shattered lying,
Ov'er my vanished memories sighing,
Low I hear, with bitter crying,
Him!
When a mother falling glimmer
Sees the dying glow grow dimmer;
Now, through all the hate intense,
Him I see!

DEATH AND THE HIGHWAYMAN.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

The days of highwaymen are over in Merry England. To be sure, men are known to take purses, and even to blow brains out for the sake of them, but they are common malefactors, as vulgar as the city knife-breakers and pickpockets, and as likely to come to grief.

There was a time, however, when this was not so. At that date a certain romance hung about the highwayman, and he was popularly regarded as a gentleman who was unfortunately compelled to take to the road, and dictated the customs of the law, who was in no good odor, and to spare gentle ladies and innocent children, or even to give to the deserving poor what they snatched by force from the undeserving rich.

So girls gathered together in the gloaming and told tales of their valor, and mothers exhausted themselves Continent of the Road for lovers, and there were few boys who did not aspire to them, and who practiced to take pay for the use of their arms and venison pasties, and pated from them with the cheerful cry of "Good speed, you!" instead of rushing to the authorities with information, as would a lackey of to-day. To be sure, there was a difference of opinion.

Old gentlemen who were left to walk home after a convivial evening, and who had, in the night, never enough money for their lights, hearth and games and their wantrobes in the hands of some merry highwayman, were not so complacent; and grave-coach loaded robbed passengers had but indignation to express, in which the Claude Duvals and Robin Hoods of the day did not share, and which expression of their sullen accomplished nothing. And if now and then one gallant captain was caught and put to death by the strong arm of the law, the girls wept for him as for a martyr, and the ballad-singers made a little fortune from the rehearsal of his exploits.

Of those who knew best of all the gentlemen of the road Captain Blythe was the handsomest, the most daring, the most gallant. He was a young man, and had been (as he himself has acknowledged in a moment) he was indeed a non-Solomon's wisdom) one, which means that when the family estate is small and the coffers not over full, brothers are less than welcome to poor wan.

So, being penniless, and thus losing the girl he loved, who married his elder brother, the gifted young man took to the road, and was for the last, undisputed head of a band of outlaws, called himself Blythe, and went on daring a young fellow as ever trod the earth, became ere long their captain.

Beware of Blythe and his men. They are said to be not to be met with a warning that made a whole stage full of stalwart men turn pale with terror.

For fifty years Jack Blythe had been a terror to the country-side, and long beyond expectation. He feared no man. With the magistrates was in search of him, he, under another name, danced with his daughter at a county ball, and left early enough to surprise the magistrate's company on the road, and rob him of the warrant of arrest.

He sent a ring by the trinket which was to love gift, and so marked, back to its owner, that the recipient might be warned.

He had promised to publish her name in payment for a kiss, which she gave him. It was paid, and was thrilling.

And one night he rode out upon the road with four of his men, left them in wait for the mail coach, and rob it and its passengers at any cost.

They reined their horses in the shadow of a clump of trees and waited. Presently the mail coach, drawn upon the road, making a sharp turn, the driver, instead of an old convoy as usual, with three soldiers within it, and two poor dwellings were visible. All else was black and silent and desolate. The highwaymen were in high spirits; Captain Blythe at his head. They were rash and careless from whatsoever.

"Halt!" cried one. "Listen. They are coming."

"These are hoofs, not wheels," said another.

"Hoofs or wheels, welcome!" said the Captain.

The sound came nearer. A solitary rider evidently, advanced to the road. In a moment more they saw it—a figure in a black cloak, with a hood drawn over its head, advancing the face, riding on a black steed without bridle or saddle.

Captain Blythe waved his hand, and rode out full view, and rode out to meet it.

On the instant the figure drew rein, and the horse stood utterly still—a black blot in the moonlight—as if the white moonlight the horse and rider alike motionless. There was something unearthly about the whole affair.

"Stand and deliver!" said Captain Blythe.

"I stand," answered a voice from under the cloak—a voice hollow, deep and awful. "What would ye have? Your money or your life? We bring nothing into this world, and we can take nothing out of it. Amen."

Captain Blythe laughed.

"French fun, by Jove," he said; "but keep your sermon for your consolation upon the road. I will take your life, since you will have it, unless you may have about you, at your earliest convenience."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the stranger, in hollow tones. "Ha! ha! ha! Beware! touch me not!"

"Beware!" scoffed Captain Blythe. "Who are you, pray, be I am one who fears neither the King, the Devil, nor Death. Your money or your life!"

"Keep your money and give me your life. I am Death!" answered the stranger, in the same unearthly tones.

And he spoke he flung back cloak and hood, and the terrified highwaymen saw a grinning skull and the white bones of a skeleton.

"Your life!" repeated the awful voice. But almost before the words were uttered Captain Blythe had put spurs to his horse, and, with a whole party galloped furiously down the road, shouting and calling on the saints.

The next morning, when the people of the village of Hilton came to their work from the road, they came to prayer, they found a man kneeling before the altar—a young man, finely dressed, booted and spurred. Asking his name, he replied—

"I am but a poor penitent, who, for his sins, has seen Death even in life. Have mercy upon me!"

And so, since he had a vast hoard of ill-gotten wealth in place at their disposal, Captain Jack Blythe, the noted highwayman, became a benefactor to the church, and was received in mention with honor upon the road, and as the terror of the forward was become the property of the monastery.

Five years passed—ten—fifteen—still he was Brother John—still he was humble penitent—still in his little cell he kept a skull and cross-bones, in memory of his awful warning. As he had been the first among the sinners, he became the first among the saints, and did good works; for, finding the monastery not a rich one, with power to his abuse, and fasting and praying; doing much good among the poor, who grew to love him, and to whom he offer the money which he begged from the wealthy.

Good Brother John — was known near and far for all excellent things. He was no longer young, nearly in the sixties, but for he was still the handsomest man in the whole country side.

It was a day in midwinter, a bitter day. The snow lay deep upon the ground, and the rain had frozen upon the snow in great sheets and sunbeam. But above it all were heard cries of distress. "Help, help, help!" they cried on the blast: "Help, help, help!" It faded away in an awful moan.

The brothers crossed themselves. And the abbot, a good old man upon the road. He had not studied and then upon him, and he had sustained woeful injuries. Bearing in his right hand a crucifix, and with the seal of the night Brother John set beside his bed calling his beads. One long rosary was thrown beside the bed, but it fell upon the floor.

He tried the old man, suddenly lifting up his head, he said:

"Is it well, my son?" asked Brother John.

"I fear I shall offend you," said the old man; "but you are like a fellow from a flourished some fifteen years ago—like as two peas. You have heard of the highwayman who was Blythe—Captain Jack Blythe?"

"I have," answered Brother John, "and such things," said Brother John, in the image of Death, "and such things, in the image of Death, though some offend the eye."

"How his pictures," said the old man, running on, as people in a slight fever are apt to; only once. He was a handsome man, so to speak, with a handsome face, and he had a mask that was a skull, and a cloak, and he was a highwayman, and a wife for his head and he'd whirlwind all in his right hand spoke, and how they were light—and with a hooded cloak on, so he looked like Death, and the highwayman indeed, and he demanded the purse of a shrewd man who was in a gray cloak. 'Twas a perfect skeleton, Brother John, with the distance. Come, and I can tell you how it was. So the mail coach and safety to the highwayman, and made off with the richest booty."

He babbled on, talking of this thing and that, and Brother John sat and listened to him for over two hours; but he prattled to every a wealth. Brother John had forgotten all of the world at Santy Hook, and its rate of motion, by the time he became free from to him.

One of the most interesting facts in modern geology is the discovery of the existence of coal from a number of observations made within a few years. Coal is found in Greenland, and even in the Arctic regions, where it is not mined because of its brilliancy and beauty, is gradually receding from the sea. The size of the coal measures of similar space is estimated by Professor Hughes at about one hundred square miles.

The peculiar naphthalic odor which we have noticed in connection with the Cumberland coal is also found in the Greenland coal. Professor Heer is said to arise wholly from impurities, being quite absent from pure coal. Professor Nordenskiold, the Swedish traveler that when carbonic acid is passed through water, it is capable of dissolving a certain amount of coal, and that this solution is capable of penetrating the finest pores of the coal, and we are led in the way of supposing that the sap of the trees from which the coal was formed may have contained a similar solution, and that the coal may have been originally deposited in the form of a jelly, which afterward hardened. If it be proved to be coal, the solution of the question of the origin of coal will be a great step in advance.

Coal is found in Spitzbergen, and